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THE FINE ARTS

THE FINE ARTS

A MANUAL

By G. BALDWIN BROWN, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF FINE ART IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

SECOND EDITION

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
1902

N7425
B8
1902

~~704~~
~~B878~~
vol 2

First Edition, 1891.
Second Edition, enlarged, 1902.

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BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE additional matter contained in the present edition of this manual has been as far as possible adjusted to the original scheme of the sections, and these remain the same in total number as in the former issue. The illustrations have been augmented and their quality improved. They are, for the most part, from familiar works of art, but the scope of the book only admits of a statement of the broader and more obvious truths about the arts of form, which are best illustrated by acknowledged masterpieces.

March, 1902.

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PART I

ART AS THE EXPRESSION OF POPULAR FEELINGS AND IDEALS

INTRODUCTION

A DECADE OF ÆSTHETIC LITERATURE

§ 1. Contributions to Practical Æsthetics

In the ten years that have elapsed since the first publication of this manual, the various departments of artistic literature have received substantial additions. In that of practical æsthetics, the most interesting contributions to which are those furnished by artists themselves, the votaries of architecture are generally more active than those of the sister arts. Architects meet to discuss the present problems of constructive and decorative art, and the reports of their gatherings often contain suggestions of value for artistic theory. As a more systematic contribution to the subject there may be mentioned the first portion of Mr. H. H. Statham's *Architecture for General Readers* which embraces a discussion of this art from the theoretical side.[1]

Painters and sculptors, on the other hand, seldom indulge in any literary treatment of their arts, and leave the task of elucidation to others. The modern literature of these arts consists largely in sumptuous and costly volumes on individual masters, the interest of which is mainly biographical or critical, and with these we are not concerned, though special note must be taken of the late R. A. M. Stevenson's *Art of Velasquez*,[1] an earnest attempt to make the public understand what a picture really means. Apart from formal works, there is to be considered the voluminous artistic literature of the periodical press. Though in press notices and critiques the personal element may be unduly prominent, and though we are wearied with the lo here! and lo there! which announce the fleeting artistic triumphs of an hour, yet there is a good deal in this literature that has more than ephemeral value. There runs through it a healthy recognition of the great and permanent qualities on which depends the higher sort of artistic excellence. The critic of the day has perforce to write of what the artists actually offer to the public, but it does not follow that he is satisfied with his theme. For the architectural monument that relies for its effect on greatness and simplicity; the marble or the bronze studied and subtily wrought in every line and on every inch of surface; the concentrated reposeful picture that does not start out of its frame in clamorous brilliancy, there is ready a fair measure of appreciation.

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[1] Second edition, London, 1896.

This undertone in current criticism corresponds

[1] London, 1895.

to a real advance that the last decade has witnessed not only in the domain of architecture but in that of the representative arts. Ten years ago many of the younger artists who have taken the art of painting seriously were still more or less outsiders, but they have now everywhere, except at the Royal Academy of Arts, won their position as representing the really artistic tendencies in the British painting of the times. At Burlington House, where for years past one or two pictures, not always of British origin, have exhausted the artistic interest of the galleries, the Lecture Room and Rotunda have contained evidence of the renewed youth which has come to the sculptor's art. Something is owed to the specimens of decorative metal-work the appearance of which is so welcome, but the artistic impression now produced by this part of the yearly exhibition is due to the genuine efforts on the part of our younger sculptors to win from nature those intimate secrets of beauty that only the plastic art can reveal.

The fact noted above, that, after all, the great landmarks of art remain conspicuous and honoured as of old, has made it needless to alter much in the discussions of practical æsthetic questions contained in the first edition of this manual. The object of it as stated in the preface was 'to stimulate the reader's interest in the more purely artistic qualities of works of art,' and in spite of all the phases of 'modernité' through which the art of Europe and America is passing, these qualities abide in the main as they were fixed in the world's acknowledged masterpieces. The limits of this book make it impossible to follow the attractive bye-paths of modern art which are being opened up every day. All that can be aimed at is such a re-statement of the fundamental principles of the arts of form established in the classical ages, as may at the same time elucidate all that is most solidly artistic in the special methods of the moment.

§ 2. The Bearing on Æsthetic Study of the Doctrine of Development.

Passing from the subject of practical art and its treatment in current literature to that of theoretical study, we note that in the branch of the latter concerned with the origin and early forms of art fresh observations have greatly modified the conclusions that passed current a decade ago. We are here on the territory of science, where everything is newly explored and measured, and there are no classical models or fundamental principles against which time lifts his scythe in vain. The modern spirit has proved so irresistible a solvent of a priori theories of the pre-scientific age, that it may easily be credited with the power of settling every question posed. Many may imagine that it is only needful to apply the ready-made categories of evolutionist thought in order to solve at once the long-standing problems of the genesis and essential character of art. Starting, for example, from the earliest actual manifestations of art accessible to observation, they may expect to see the organism of art unfolding itself in forms more and more elaborate in correspondence with the progressive complexity of civilization. As a fact the phenomena of art by no means answer to this expectation. While the essential nature of the artistic activity seems to have been the same at all epochs,[1] some forms of art have grown more elaborate as civilization advanced and others have shown a corresponding impoverishment. The music and painting of modern date may involve the result of development, but can we say the same of monumental sculpture and architecture? Does not the dance of our own time represent a mere survival of what was once a complex and varied form of art? In view of these facts it is better for the present to keep the words 'development' and 'evolution' out of artistic literature. The spell that they have cast over our minds accounts for a very curious recent use of the latter word in connection with certain special manifestations of art. The discovery has been made by travellers that many ornamental patterns on the implements or fabrics of the modern savage, which used to be regarded as freely invented designs of a geometrical order, are really the highly conventionalized far-off copies of natural objects.[2] This discovery has been brought before English readers in the works noted below,[1] the titles of which hardly seem to correspond with their contents. The modern ear attuned to scientific utterances is tickled when the phrase 'Evolution in Art' occurs in the title of a book, but when we find that this 'evolution' consists mainly in the gradual degeneration of portrayals of natural objects into mere patterns of lines and blobs, our faith in the value for art of these magic formulæ is somewhat shaken.

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[1] The latest writer on this subject, Dr. Yrjö Hirn of Helsingfors, whose work will be noticed later on, believes that the 'innermost nature' of the artistic impulse will always remain the same. *The Origins of Art: a Psychological and Sociological Inquiry*, London, 1900, p. 100.

[2] Dr. von den Steinen, the explorer of Central Brazil, noticed in a chief's house a piece of bark with patterns painted on it. His first impression was that the various zig-zags, dots, rings, rows of dia-

§ 3. Contributions to Artistic Theory from the side of Anthropology.

If the current conceptions of development have little apparent application to art, the scientific or inductive method is on the other hand of the utmost value for the study of its phenomena.

The Anthropologist has far more to offer us than a correction of our impressions of savage ornament. Observations of the customs and possessions of uncivilized man, undertaken primarily

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monds and triangles, were only ornaments neatly wrought but without any ulterior significance. He asked what the patterns were called and was told to his surprise the names of fishes, birds, and even of articles of dress, and found on investigation that all the forms were originally pictures of objects of the kind. Other investigators have fully confirmed the truth of the conclusion which these facts indicate. It may be noted however that they must not be taken as precluding the possibility of the existence of invented linear patterns as a whole. These were known as we shall see in the Palæolithic age. *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral Brasiliens*, Berlin, 1894, p. 258.

[1] Henry Balfour, *The Evolution of Decorative Art*, London, 1893. Prof. A. C. Haddon, *Evolution in Art as illustrated by the Life-Histories of Designs*, London, 1895.

from the sociological standpoint, have brought to light a vast collection of facts about primitive art, which not only are of interest in themselves as showing how varied and copious are its manifestations, but cast a welcome light upon many fundamental questions of artistic theory. It is no longer possible to discuss æsthetics from a station on the visionary heights of the Beautiful. 'Das Schoene Ueberhaupt' which used to be the starting point of a deductive process ending in the concrete work of art on the artist's easel or modelling-stand, is now abandoned, and the process begins quite at the other end with some very crude and probably unbeautiful manifestations of the artistic impulse among aborigines of central Australia.

The chief results of this inductive study have been summed up in the work on the *Beginnings of Art* by Professor Grosse of Freiburg in Baden.[1] In his collection of data Dr. Grosse limits himself to tribes in the most primitive known condition, those, that is, which subsist on the proceeds of hunting and have not entered on the agricultural stage, but from this comparatively limited field he has collected a varied and most instructive body of facts, which modify considerably views previously current. Taking this work in conjunction with other more special studies in Anthropology and the life of animals, we may notice here one or two of the principal points in which recent study has led to a reconsideration of orthodox dogma.

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[1] *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, Freiburg i. B. und Leipzig, 1894 [American Translation, *The Beginnings of Art*, New York, 1897].

§ 4. The Doctrine of the Freedom of Art in a New Light.

Amidst the cross-currents of opinion that have complicated æsthetic discussion there is one doctrine in which writers of all the different schools have agreed, and this is the doctrine of the freedom or independence of art. 'Metaphysicians as well as Psychologists, Hegelians as well as Darwinians, all agree in declaring that a work, or performance, which can be proved to serve any utilitarian, non-æsthetic object must not be considered as a genuine work of art. True art has its own law in itself, and rejects every extraneous purpose; that is the doctrine which, with more or less explicitness, has been stated by Kant, Schiller, Spencer, Hennequin, Grosse, Grant Allen, and others. And popular opinion agrees in this respect with the conclusions of science.'[1] Grosse, who states that 'the æsthetic faculty is not engaged in for an end lying outside itself but is its own end,' and 'is opposed as the exact opposite to practical activity which always serves some end outside itself,'[2] asks nevertheless the pertinent question how it happens that the races lowest in the scale of civilization, among whom the struggle for existence is hardest, are able and willing to consecrate so much energy to this useless pursuit. 'Even the most primitive and poverty-stricken tribes,' he points out, 'devote a great part of their time and strength to art—to that art which civilized nations are coming more and more to regard from the height of their practical and scientific attainments as an idle pastime.'[1] If this last were the character of art among savages, it is inconceivable that the tribes who thus waste their time and strength should not disappear before more practical rivals. Dr. Grosse solves the problem by an interesting demonstration showing that in all the arts practised by man in the primitive stage of culture there is a secondary practical value over and above the direct æsthetic stimulus and satisfaction.

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[1] Hirn, *The Origins of Art*, p. 7.

[2] *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, p. 46.

The loving manipulation of the weapon or implement in the processes of balancing, smoothing and polishing adds to its efficiency, while the more direct artistic effort in the form of ornament stamps it as its owner's property, or by a totem-mark secures some magic efficacy and at any rate links the holder, for common work, with his tribesmen of the same insignia. The adornment of the person is dynamic in the various relations of life. As enhancing the personality it is of practical moment, not only as giving prominence in joint operations, but as favouring success in courtship and war. The dance, which is serviceable to the individual both as bodily training and as drill, is of the highest social value. Involving the common activity of a large body of performers, it implies continued practice and discipline which are potent in forming a compact community out of scattered and isolated units.

It would appear, therefore, that art among savages, far from being a mere pastime or ministering to supposed æsthetic sensibilities, is really a practical necessity, if not of life, at any rate of racial development and progress, and the question is at once forced upon us What is the bearing of these facts on the doctrine of the freedom and independence of art.

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 298.

This doctrine was formed upon the data furnished by the arts in the civilized modern world, at a time when the facts of savage art were not yet subjects of scientific study. The data in question, however, were not in this respect essentially different from those now furnished by the ethnologist. Civilized art in modern times has its own relation to the practical side of life and its own forms of constraint. It is pursued habitually as a profession by those who make their living from it. In certain forms of it, such as the decorative sculpture and painting on a public building, its theme, extent and artistic character are prescribed. The architect works under a still severer constraint, and is compelled to curb his artistic flights within limits set for him by external powers.

Now, as an actual fact, the doctrine of the freedom of art was established by thinkers of the last two centuries who were all perfectly well aware of these truths, but did not regard them as vitiating their theory. They held that these outward conditions of financial pressure, this ordering of the task, were not of the essence of the matter, and that the creative energy of the artist was not deprived by them of its spontaneity and freedom. Modern experience shows that the art which from accidental causes is freed from these restraints is no better, no more artistic, than that which feels all the force they can exercise. Certain artists, Titian for one, have been even sordidly anxious about their pay, while others, for example Tintoretto, were supremely indifferent to anything save the work itself, but was Titian less the artist than his younger rival? In the buildings of the great French exhibition of 1900 the designers of many of the pavilions and entrances were able to create in freedom, and as a result they perpetrated monstrosities; while the architect of the Petit Palais, who had the limits of his task marked out for him, produced one of the masterpieces of modern art. The psychology of artistic creation is a complex subject, and without entering upon it we may point to the belief, which artists themselves will endorse, that fixed limits, a certain pressure of constraint, even the iron hand of necessity, may sometimes really stimulate the powers and wing the flight of artistic creation. Go and discourse on the 'freedom of art' to a painter who lives by his work, and who is struggling to finish for sending-in day a picture on the sale of which he has counted during all the months of winter! He may retort on you that art is a bitter slavery, but yet all the time he and everyone else who knows what art is are perfectly aware that in the actual work the sense of constraint disappears, the forms and colours and manner of the brush-strokes come to the mind as fresh as if they were fairy gifts. The art of the piece, so far as it is truly artistic, is from beginning to end free creation. There are of course cases in which the external pressure and resultant mental strain are too great and the healthy working of the artistic powers is hindered; cases too in which production is carried on in a mechanical and lifeless way, as is the fashion of 'pot boilers'; but the worker himself is perfectly conscious of the fact that his life as artist is for the time being suspended. It is not that his art has ceased to be free, it has ceased for the time to be in the true sense art at all. In examining on a subsequent page the actual artistic activity of primitive man we shall discern the same element of freedom that is constant in the art-work of the modern. Hence the doctrine of the freedom of art, when rightly comprehended, stands exactly where it stood. No essential modification need be made in it as a consequence of modern researches.

§ 5. The Relations in Primitive Times of Play, Art, and Work.

An important branch of the theory of the origins of art is concerned with the nature of play and the relation of play to art. Ten years ago the current theory of play was that which, started by an *obiter dictum* of Kant to the effect that 'Art compared with labour may be considered as play,'[1] was developed by the poet Schiller in his interesting letters on the *Æsthetic Education of*

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[1] Quoted from Professor Knight, *The Philosophy of the Beautiful*, London, 1891, p. 62.

Man,[1] and established on grounds of physiology and psychology by Herbert Spencer.[2] The publication in 1896-9 of the two works by Professor Groos, of the University of Basel, on the *Play of Animals*[3] and the *Play of Men*[4] has completely revolutionized opinion on the subject. Both Schiller and Herbert Spencer have explained play, alike in animals and men, as the spontaneous discharge of an overplus of nervous energy that, having at the moment no practical function to serve, works itself off in simulated action. Through habitual use in the necessary actions of life, the animal powers become developed so as to be always ready to answer to the accustomed strain. This same habitual use produces also a sort of expectation of and even impatience for the strain, and if the demand be not made there is an accumulation of superfluous energy which is ready to respond to the slightest stimulus. When there is no real stimulus at hand—none of the serious business on which the activities of the particular power generally depend —then 'a simulation of those activities is easily fallen into, when circumstances offer it in place of the real activities. . . . Play is . . . an artificial exercise of powers which, in default of their natural exercise, become so ready to discharge that they relieve themselves by simulated actions in place of real actions.'[1]

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[1] Schiller's *Sämmtliche Schriften*, ed. Goedeke, Stuttgart, 1867, etc., Theil x., p. 274 ff. (English translation by Weiss, London, 1845).

[2] *Principles of Psychology*, Part ix., chapter ix., Æsthetic Sentiments.

[3] *Die Spiele der Thiere*, Jena, 1896 (American translation, *The Play of Animals*, London, 1898).

[4] *Die Spiele der Menschen*, Jena, 1899 (American translation, *The Play of Man*, New York, 1901).

The tendency of this account of play is to make its activities posterior to, and, as it were, mere echoes of, activities of the practical kind. The conclusions to which Professor Groos has come exhibit play as a far more serious and necessary element in life than it has hitherto been reckoned. Play is in his view the instinctive performance by the young of every creature of the bodily and mental acts which will be necessary to it in the serious business of after life. It is not a repetition of these acts but a preparation for them, a needful practice and training of the powers for later use. Such play is forced upon the young creature by inherited instinct. The little girl does not play with her doll because she has had to nurse babies and feels the want of the accustomed occupation and interest, but because she is a descendant of innumerable mothers, and in the normal order of things will have herself to be a mother in her turn. The kitten pursues the rolling ball of worsted long before she has fleshed her maiden claws on her first mouse. It is not the hunts of the past but of the future that urge her to the mimic chase. So powerful is this instinct that, far from waiting till there is an accumulation of surplus energy ready for discharge, it forces the already wearied creature to renewed activity. A retriever may be tired out with a long run after his mistress's bicycle, but when they come home by the lake in the park, if she shy a bit of stick into the water, however weary he is he will plunge in after it and bring it to her feet. Dr. Groos even makes the suggestive remark that in the economy of nature the creature does not play because it is young but is young because it has to play—that the provision of a season of youth gives it an opportunity to play, and in playing to develop the powers on which in maturity existence and nutriment depend.

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[1] Herbert Spencer, *l.c.*

The close connection of art with play, emphasized in the first edition of this Manual, has been, since the time at least of Schiller, a commonplace. The poet's theory of play already referred to passes insensibly into a theory of art, and Herbert Spencer's treatment of the same theme is placed in the chapter on the æsthetic sentiments. It is understood that the studies of play by Professor Groos are only preliminary to a treatment of the philosophy of art. Though there is this obvious connection, there are characteristic differences between the two which will be dealt with on a succeeding page. A good deal however that may be said with truth about play applies equally to art, and the view of play just noticed corresponds to the conception of primitive art, which vindicates for it a serious even a vital relation to the practical business of life.

An examination of the *work* of primitive peoples leads to a result almost as striking as the analysis of their *play*. In the modern system of ideas in which we have grown up, work and play are polar opposites, and it is somewhat startling to be told that 'in the early days of the development of human civilization work and play cannot be separated.' In the book from which these words are taken[1] Professor Bücher points out the difficulty which the temperament of the savage puts in the way of the continuous work we are accustomed to. He can only do such work by turning work into play with the aid of rhythmical chants which accompany and lighten the labour. Still more salutary is this artistic aid to labour in cases where the combined efforts of a number of workers are necessary. Here the regulation by measure of the joint movements is absolutely essential to any effective operations, while the contagious excitement communicated by the common vocal and muscular expression carries labour up into the ideal region of art.

Among primitive peoples, accordingly, the activities of play, of art, and of serious business are not distinct, but in a sense interpenetrate, so that something of the élan and freshness of the two former is carried into the latter more prosaic goings-on, while on the other side life yokes to her car of progress these gracious agencies, which are made, without their consciousness, to labour for the solid advancement of the race.

From this altered standpoint we can see how to correct certain unsatisfactory features in the Spencerian treatment of æsthetics. Both Schiller and his English follower give to art, if not to play, a high spiritual rank. 'What is man,' asks the former 'before beauty draws out in him the capacity for free enjoyment and the serene Form tames the wildness of life,' and again, 'Man only plays when in the full meaning of the term he is Man, and he is only completely Man when he plays,' while Herbert Spencer says that 'the higher but less essential powers as well as the lower but more essential powers . . . have activities that are carried on for the sake of the immediate gratifications derived, without reference to ulterior benefits; and to such higher powers æsthetic products yield these substituted activities as games yield them to various lower powers.'[1] And yet we are taught at the same time that the energy which results in the play wherein man reaches his full human development, and which ministers to the higher human powers, is only a kind of effervescence of the nature, the throwing-off of a force that after being for a time pent-up is now allowed harmlessly to run to waste. The considerations just brought before the reader point to a far worthier conception of the relation of art to the higher life of men. It is not the mere froth on the top of the foaming wine that is dissipated into air, but rather the very spirit of the grape that rises in airy globes from the amber depths,

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[1] K. Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, 2te Aufl., Leipzig, 1899, p. 250.

> 'Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
> Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth.'

In other words art is given out rather from the depths of the nature of man than merely from off its surface. Without losing its spontaneity it gives exercise to, and in exercising expresses, the whole nature, and serves in the picturesque phrase of Guyau as 'une gymnastique de l'esprit.'[1]

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[1] *Principles of Psychology*, Part ix. ch. ix.

§ 6. The exalted importance of Art as an element in Human Life.

It will thus be seen that the tendency of the newer results of speculation on these subjects has been to exalt the importance of art as an element in human life. It is true that no higher place could ever be claimed for it than was accorded by thinkers like Schelling in the great philosophic age of a century ago. The arguments based on the anthropological studies of the end of the nineteenth century are on a different plane from the idealistic speculation of its early decades, but the result on æsthetic theory has been the same.

In this connection may be noticed a significant change of opinion upon the question of the æsthetic sense in animals. It is now generally acknowledged that æsthetic feelings, like those of an ethical character, are the prerogative of man alone.[2] In any discussion of the origins of art, animals cannot be ignored. In excited movements and cries or melodious notes, in brilliant colours and pride of port, in a love of what is showy and glittering, in elaborate constructions, they act and produce in a fashion that at any rate reminds us of the artistic activities of men. In the first edition of this Manual there was pointed out one essential difference between these animal performances and human art, in that the former lack the element of Order, as manifested in rhythm or proportion, without which art cannot exist. Naturalists now go further and reject the view, to which the language of Darwin seemed to lend colour, that the females of animals, especially birds, exercise æsthetic choice at pairing time in favour of the most beautifully marked suitors. It is the custom now to regard these secondary marks of sex, often more gaudy than pleasing, which are actively flaunted before the hen in prenuptial performances, as a striking display intended to impress the female with the sex and the ardour of the wooer, rather than as an exhibition of what is specifically beautiful.

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[1] *Les problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine*, Paris, 1884, p. 10.

[2] 'Though animals may be incidentally attracted by beautiful objects they have no æsthetic sense of beauty.' Prof. Lloyd Morgan, *Animal Life and Intelligence*, London, 1890-1, p. 413.

§ 7. Recent Speculation as to the nature of the Artistic Impulse in Man.

Up to this point we have been concerned with historical inferences drawn from objective facts scientifically observed and grouped, that have resulted in new views upon the conditions and organization of the life of primitive man. On the subjective or psychological side as well as on that of sociology the question of the origin and early forms of art has given rise to a good deal of discussion. The nature of the artistic impulse in man, and the relation of this to his other feelings and powers, have been the problems set, and these have been dealt with in various treatises, among which may be mentioned those of Mr. Henry R.

Marshall of New York.[1] There is an effort here to get back to the real beginning of æsthetic activities by connecting them with the most elementary feelings of our nature. The author claims that 'Æsthetics may be properly looked upon as a special branch of the broader science of pleasure and pain,' that it is 'a branch of hedonics or the science of pleasure.' In defining the kind of pleasure coincident with the activities of art, Mr. Marshall finds that the reflex satisfaction to ourselves arises from the pleasing of others. The art impulse he defines as 'the tendency to do blindly what shall attract by pleasing.'[2] That this explanation hardly covers all the cases in point will appear as we proceed; it is noticed here as typical of many suggestions of the kind that aim at fixing the special characteristics of the pleasure which ex hypothesi the free activity of art must afford.

The latest and by far the most elaborate and most satisfactory work in this field is that by Dr. Yrjö Hirn, of the University of Finland, already referred to.[3] Dr. Hirn begins with a psychological study of human feelings, from the mass of which he distinguishes those that assist at the birth of art, and proceeds, in chapters of a more sociological kind, to exhibit the working of the artistic impulse under the influence of the various motives and demands operative in early communities. The book is distinguished from the majority of the psychological studies of art by the attention given to the subject of artistic form, on which there are some good remarks in the chapter on 'Art the Reliever.' As a rule, in the branch of æsthetic literature under notice, more attention has been paid to the analysis of the motive power or impulse to expression, which furnishes as it were the raw material of art, than to the action of the human intelligence in giving form to the resulting product.

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[1] *Pain, Pleasure and Æsthetics, an Essay concerning the Psychology of Pain and Pleasure, with special reference to Æsthetics*, London, 1894.

Æsthetic Principles, New York, 1895.

[2] *Pain*, etc., pp. 112, 347, 104.

[3] *The Origins of Art: A Psychological and Sociological Inquiry*, by Yrjö Hirn, lecturer on Æsthetic and Modern Literature at the University of Finland, Helsingfors. London, 1900.

This last offers, however, a fruitful field of study. The fundamental distinction between play and art, for example, is to be found in the fact that the activity of play, as being essentially *exercise*, has no special form or limit, whereas the artistic activity is always controlled by measure. It is not enough to see, with Professor Groos, that art differs from play in its ethical content, and its relation to truth,[1] or with Dr. Hirn, that art is distinct from play in that in the former 'something is made and something survives.'[2] The point to be emphasized is that what is made and survives is envisaged as a unity, and only becomes a work of art in virtue of its distinctness of form, whether this appears in the arts of movement as rhythm, or in those of rest as proportion or composition.

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[1] *Die Spiele der Menschen*, Theorie des Spieles, der aesthetische Standpunkt, p. 507.

[2] *Origins*, etc., p. 29.

Lastly, it may be noticed that the psychologists seem all so far dominated by sociological ideas as to insist on art as essentially a social function. It is noteworthy that Grosse, who writes avowedly from the sociological standpoint, admits that 'one cannot say that æsthetic production proceeds only from the intention of affecting others,'[1] but Hirn commits himself to the statement that 'art is in its innermost nature a social activity.'[2] It is difficult to see how a conclusion of the kind can be arrived at by psychologists, who base art on the phenomena of feeling and pleasure, which belong essentially to the individual. This question will be touched upon from the standpoint of the objective facts of art on a later page.

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[1] *Anfänge*, p. 47.

[2] *Origins*, p. 74.

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF ART

§ 8. Intention and Plan of the Work

THE present work is designed to deal with the arts of form, in the shape of the so-called fine arts of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting, the subject of the decorative or industrial arts being omitted from consideration. The book is not intended to furnish outlines of the history of the arts, nor is it a technical manual; its aim is rather to discuss briefly and in a simple manner some of the more important facts and laws of artistic production, which should be familiar alike to the historical student of art and to the practical worker.

The subject falls into three main divisions. In the first Part, art is exhibited as a product of human nature, born before civilization, but nurtured by civilization to fuller growth. The second contains some general discussion of the conditions of artistic effect, and in the third certain points connected with the three great arts of form are selected for treatment, the aim being rather to furnish a basis for intelligent art criticism, than to discuss systematic æsthetics. The object is a practical one, and will have been attained if the reader's interest be stimulated in the more purely artistic qualities of works of art. These qualities are apt sometimes to be neglected for matters of ethical and historical moment, with which the student and critic of art is not directly concerned, but it is clear that there can be no advance in public comprehension of art on its artistic side, unless attention is directed more strictly to the points of treatment essential to artistic expression, and less to side-issues, however attractive these may be for literary discussion.

§ 9. The Earliest Activities which lead on to Art.

The first task before us is to gain some knowledge of the nature of the artistic activity in man, and for this purpose we will pass in review some of the earliest or most primitive manifestations of art, or at any rate of those movements of action and production that pass ultimately into art.

The search for these manifestations carries us back to a remote, though not the remotest, epoch of human history. The very earliest relics of man in the so-called 'drift' period exhibit no distinct traces of artistic activity, though at the same time they give us no evidence that precludes its existence. Artistic products of great interest have however come down to us from epochs the remoteness of which is measured by tens of thousands of years, while in the actual world of to-day there are forms of art which flourish among the very poorest and most 'primitive'[1] peoples.

Which of the activities in question are the earliest it is fruitless to inquire, but as elementary as any others are personal adornment and the dance and song. In the inland caves of western France, inhabited by mankind in the age of the mammoth, have been found collections of perforated sea-shells that must have been imported and used for the adornment of the person.[2] The motive for the decoration is a matter for inquiry, but a useful hint is given by the fact that there have been also found under similar conditions, perforated in the same way for suspension, the teeth of various animals. This suggests that the spoils of conquered and slain beasts were worn on the person as a token of triumph, and gives colour to the hypothesis of Herbert Spencer that the trophy was the first form of personal adornment.[3] Starting from beginnings such as these, we find the practice of decorating the person carried among primitive peoples to quite extraordinary lengths, so that 'it is scarcely too much to say that among savages no demand of practical life involves such lengthy and painstaking preparations as the art of bodily adornment, including the arrangement of the hair, the painting of the skin, tattooing, and the provision of numberless knick-knacks with which they deck their limbs.'[1]

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[1] Primitive, that is, in comparison with the civilized races of modern Europe, but not strictly speaking 'primitive' when compared *e.g.* with the pre-historic cave-dwellers. The bearing of this distinction will be explained on a later page.

[2] The 'finds' in these caves are described and figured by MM. Lartet and Christy in *Reliquiæ Aquitanicæ*, London, 1865, etc.

[3] *Principles of Sociology*, Ceremonial Institutions, chapter ii.

With respect to the adornment of the implement or weapon, Professor Grosse brings evidence to show that among the most primitive peoples at present existing this is far less advanced than personal decoration.[2] In the nature of things however this might be a very early activity, for the implement has to be fashioned carefully by hand, and the addition of ornament is technically a simple matter. As a fact, among the cave-dwellers, as we shall presently see, this form of art was highly developed, so there is no ground for considering it essentially later than the adornment of the person. Here too the motive of the work is a matter for separate inquiry.

The dance is the characteristic art of the modern savage. 'There is scarcely any fact in the life of primitive peoples that is better established than the universal prevalence, the constant and persevering exercise of the dance.'[3] These dances, the most elaborate of which, the so-called 'corroborri' of the Australian natives, are pictured in a good description which Grosse has borrowed for his chapter on the subject,[4] are of two kinds called by him 'gymnastic' and 'mimetic.' As we find them now they are far too complicated to be called primitive, but there is one trait about them that suggests the early forms in which they may have begun. Some savages are described as continuing the movements of the dance, when once started, in so indefatigable a fashion that they will actually go on till they drop.[1] The mere physical exercise has intense fascination for them, and this points to the view that mere movement is the initial stage—that the caper or the fling, with a free play of the limbs, precedes the measured movements of the dance. Similarly the music or noise which always accompanies the dance[2] may originate in the whoop or holloa that gives exercise to the vocal organs. The initial activity that leads on to the human dance may thus be illustrated by the energetic muscular movements of the youth and of his dog when they take their morning run together, and in the hearty ring of their voices in the shout and in the bark with which they answer each other through the frosty air.

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[1] Bücher, *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, p. 15.

[2] *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, p. 111.

[3] Bücher, *ibid.* p. 19.

[4] *Anfänge*, viii Capitel, Der Tanz.

The beginnings of painting and sculpture, in the arts of drawing or modelling or carving a representation of a natural object, we should hardly expect to find at the most remote epochs, for they imply a considerable mental capacity.

In order to copy a thing it is necessary to isolate it from other objects, to concentrate the attention upon it and repeatedly to compare it with the imitation—processes that are by no means primitive, and this applies still more to the act of externalizing a mental picture or reminiscence when there is no original actually present.

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[1] 'Alle Naturvölker tanzen, tanzen bis zur Raserei und zur Erschöpfung ihrer Kräfte, oft bis die Tänzer . . . zu Boden sinken.'—Bücher, *ibid.* p. 20.

[2] 'There is no dance without music,' Richard Wallaschek, *Primitive Music*, London, 1893, p. 293.

As a fact, however, the remote pre-historic epoch of the palæolithic cave-dwellers of France has furnished examples of these forms of art that are not mere first attempts, but give evidence of extraordinary taste and skill. They are mostly in the form of graphic or plastic delineations of animals of various species including birds and fishes; and these are sometimes mere portraits, but at other times decoratively treated representations in which natural shapes are conventionalized for an artistic purpose.

Plate I shows some characteristic examples, from casts of originals which are to be seen in the Museum of St. Germain near Paris. At the top is a piece of mammoth tusk on which is incised a sketch of a mammoth, that must have been executed by some one who had seen this now extinct creature at the time when he was a denizen of Western France, perhaps some fifty thousand years ago. The mammoth was a great elephant with a shaggy coat, and his characteristics are given with much spirit in the sketch.[1] We see his huge curved tusks at the left hand extremity of the fragment, his trunk let down

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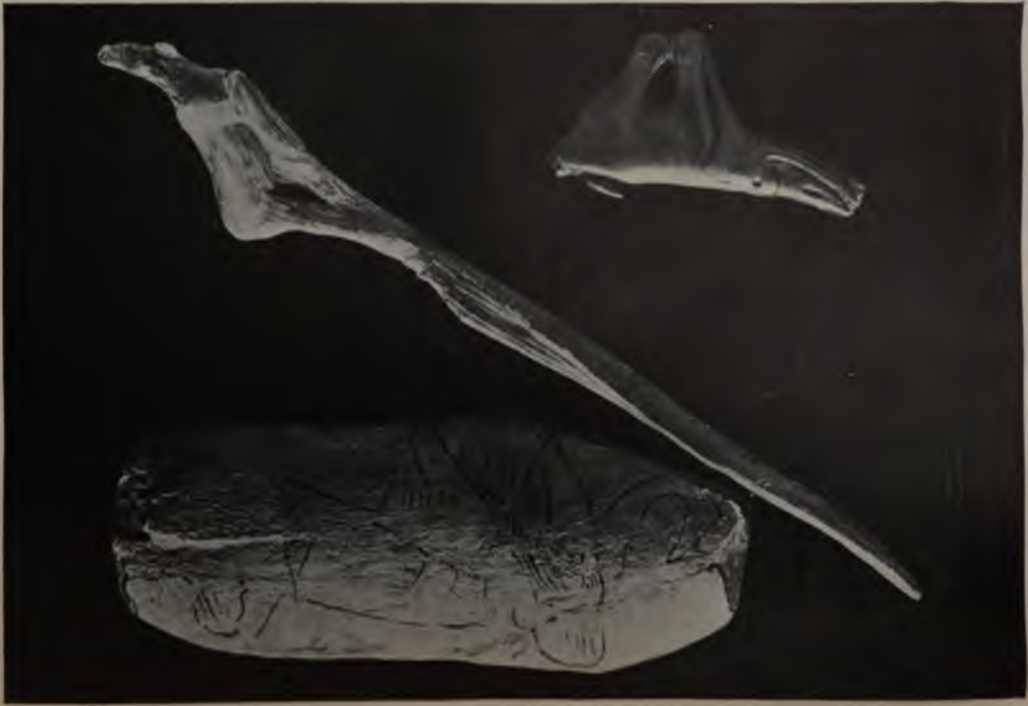
[1] The lines on the cast have been reinforced with pigment to make them show in the reduced photograph. There is no element of dubiety about these lines, which are plainly visible and reveal under a magnifying glass the fact that they have been scratched by hand with the aid of a sharp point, probably of a knife of flint. They have in fact a sort of 'burr' like that of a dry-point line in etching.



as if he were in the act of drinking, his lofty forehead, his little eye. There are the foreleg and the outlines of the body even to the tail; and, above all, the long hair upon his breast and body, which marks the species off from the smooth-skinned elephants of the modern world.

The lowest object on the plate is a comparatively clumsy attempt to render the same creature in sculpture, the tusks being massed with the projecting trunk and the four legs drawn together at the feet, the tail whisking up over the back.

Between the above is shown what is one of the most remarkable works of art in the world. It is a dagger of reindeer horn, the hilt of which is formed by a figure of the reindeer itself, with its fore legs doubled up under its body and the hind legs stretched out to join the hilt to the blade. The head is thrown back and the horns lie along the back so as to mass like the forelegs with the trunk.[1] Here is a good deal more than a mere portrait of a reindeer, for the natural shape is modified to suit the decorative purpose, the form of the animal coming ultimately into the figure of a very serviceable hilt. This, which is only the best of a number of similar objects, gives quite sufficient proof that the decoration of implements is a very early form of the artistic activity of man. Independent of this decorative use of animal forms, there have also been found implements of bone adorned with dots, zig-zags and diamonds in simple geometrical patterns in relief. These certainly did not come into being like many similar patterns among modern savages through a progressive degeneration in the representations of natural objects (Introduction, p. 5). The existence at the same time of purely naturalistic work in such abundance, and the absence of examples showing any of the stages of degeneration, preclude this hypothesis, and we must take the ornaments as freely invented linear forms.

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[1] MM. Lartet and Christy, when they published the piece in the *Revue Archéologique* for 1864, suggested it was only an unfinished sketch. The original shows more detail than can be seen in the photograph.

It has been aptly remarked by Grosse[1] that the excellence of this work considered as the skilful representation of nature, though at first sight it seems something marvellous, may be explained in part from the conditions under which it was produced. The carvings and sketches are the work of hunters, and their excellence is the result of those powers of keen and accurate observation and that skill of hand which are developed by the hunter's mode of life. That the subjects of the representation are animals follows from the fact that it is upon the beasts of the forest and the scaly denizens of the streams that the interest and faculties of the hunter and fisher are concentrated. It is however one thing to suggest why these representations of nature have been made so spirited and lifelike, and it is quite another to give a reason why they should have been made at all. A moment's speculation may be indulged in as to the genesis of this form of production.

A very plausible theory finds the preliminary stages of the graphic art in gesture. Nothing is more natural than to accompany the contemplation of some object of interest in motion by corresponding movements. The action of the younger Mr. Weller's tongue, in sympathy with the pothooks he was laboriously forming on the notepaper beneath, is in this sense typical. The same thing may occur in the case of an object of interest at rest, and it is quite conceivable that the drawing of the mammoth had the following origin. An experienced hunter points out to his son in the distance a specimen of the big game of the district, now perhaps, owing to the change of climate, already becoming scarce. He calls his attention to the most characteristic features of the beast, his curved tusks, his trunk, the shaggy hair upon his breast, and with the forefinger describes in the air or on the palm of the other hand the contours of the perhaps not clearly discernible forms. Von den Steinen tells us[1] that in Central Brazil the native who wishes to convey to another the idea of an animal imitates its cry with his voice, and at the same time describes any characteristic feature of the beast with his finger in the air. If this is not enough he draws with a stick upon the earth or in the sand. To sketch with the ready point of the flint dagger upon some smooth surface, so that the lines will be permanent, marks a distinct but easily conceivable advance, and when the object thus drawn on is portable, so that it can be carried about and exhibited, the work, as will be presently seen, assumes a new character. In the case before us the drawing seems to have been done rather from memory than from the life, and may have been executed in the cave for the benefit of the home-keeping members of the family, for the material is not something picked up hap-hazard in the field, but a portion of mammoth tusk, perhaps of the very creature itself whose downfall the picture may be meant to celebrate.

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[1] *Anfänge*, p. 185 f.

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[1] *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral Brasiliens*, p. 243.

An origin of the same kind for plastic reproduction may not be so easy to see, but here we have as a preliminary the habit of producing solid forms of desired shape in the fabrication of weapons and implements, and we have also the fact that, as we see every day, natural objects such as stones or gnarled trunks or bones often suggest a likeness to something in the animal creation, and would almost force the hand, already trained in chipping a hard material into shape, to bring the likeness out more clearly.[1] From this point of view there is more to lead up to the plastic than the graphic representation, for the imitative sketch involves a new technique. A plastic form may conceivably perpetuate a gesture, and we have illustrations of this before us when we take a country walk. No gesture is more familiar than that of pointing out the way. Peasant folks constantly use it to set the belated traveller on his course. The plastic representation of a hand with finger outstretched is a common finish to the arm of the country sign-post and we may regard it, if we like, as one of the 'origins' of the art of sculpture.

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[1] Some of the plastic representations of animals in the 'finds' of the caves seem to have had this origin, *e.g. Reliquiæ Aquitanicæ*, pl. B. xxiv. 6.

§ 10. Relation of the foregoing to current Theories of the Artistic Impulse.

So far there have been noticed examples of early activities in the fields that become in time those of decoration, of the dance and music, of painting and of sculpture. Is there anything strictly artistic about them and have they any element in common? The primary motive of personal adornment, as suggested by the hanging of trophies round the victor's limbs, may be individual distinction; that of the dance and song a mere physical discharge of stored-up energy; that of the simple linear pattern on the implement half-aimless 'whittling' with the idle knife; that of painting and sculpture the wish to convey information. Can we bring all these variously-motived activities under any one of the principles which have been suggested for the explanation of the artistic impulse? Some one or other of these principles is illustrated by each of them, but what we need is to find a single principle that will apply to all. Thus the older doctrine, that art in all its forms represents a disinterested yearning after the beautiful, may apply to decoration but not to delineatory drawing, for, as von den Steinen observes, among primitive peoples drawing, like gesture, is used to convey information and not to portray what is beautiful.[1] The desire to 'attract by pleasing' which is Mr. Henry R. Marshall's explanation of the artistic impulse[1] will not account for the initial activity of the dance and song, nor will it fit in with the fact that a whole department of personal decoration among savages, called by the Germans 'Schreckschmuck,' has for its object to terrify opponents and not to conciliate the well-disposed.[2] The Spencerian view of the source of art in play, and the explanation of this last as the throwing-off of an accumulation of surplus energy, elucidates the primitive dance and song but has no bearing on the sporting of the trophy as an origin of personal decoration.

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[1] *Unter den Naturvölkern*, p 243.

The view that is content to see the differentia of art in the freedom and spontaneity of the artistic impulse must be taken in connection with the one which emphasizes the fact that artistic activities are indulged in because they are pleasurable. It has been contended above that the old view of the freedom of art, though it needs to be judiciously guarded, does really embody a truth of vital importance, and if this be accepted, the element of pleasure follows as a matter of course. If the artistic impulse have this character of freedom and spontaneity it must be pleasurable, or it would not be indulged in, while conversely if it be pleasurable it must be free, as constraint is incompatible with this feeling. The mere vague conceptions of freedom and pleasantness do not however carry us far. Freedom in this sense cannot mean simple aimlessness. It must imply an activity determined either by instinct or reason. We may call it *self*-determined, but the second word of the compound implies direction of one kind or another, and the problem is to find the nature and tendency of this. We may in like manner grant that the activities of art are pleasurable, but there are so many sorts of pleasure that this is not enough, and we must go on to ask what *kind* of satisfaction it is that they afford. The following is offered as a general solution of the questions thus raised :

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[1] See *ante*, p. 20.

[2] Hirn, *Origins*, p. 272.

§ 11. Art as Self-Externalization.

All the primitive activities that have been passed in review may be included under the one principle that they are activities of self-externalization, resulting in a quickening of the sense of personality. This is their tendency, and from this arises their pleasurable quality. A little consideration will show that this principle (1) applies to all the cases under notice, (2) preserves intact the postulated element of freedom, (3) exhibits the artistic activity as in its inception essentially a matter of the individual and not of society, for however important social influences are in fostering the development of art they do not explain its origin.

If personal adornment begin in the trophy, it is just the concrete embodiment of the victor's sense of triumph after strain and conflict—perhaps the most powerful feeling of joy known to men. His deed hangs there, incorporate in the symbol which sustains his own consciousness of the deed and perpetuates his joy, while at the same time in the admiration of others begins that process of the nourishing of art through social influences, to the importance of which the later sections of this chapter bear testimony. Every other form of bodily decoration ministers to the same consciousness and pride of personality. The pose and parure of the youthful brave may at one time impress the idea of his unique distinction on a pre-destined bride: at another that of his weight and influence in palaver on his fellow chiefs: at a third time that of his vigour and fierceness on the approaching foemen. The practical value of the display is however independent of its reflex influence on himself, which is always of the kind under notice.

The decoration of the weapon involves two separate processes, one the simple act of adornment, which as concerning the instruments of victory is almost the same as the adornment of the victor's person; the other the making of a design, involving perhaps the copying or adaptation of natural forms. The latter process in its significance for the purpose in hand will be noticed presently. The simple act of adornment confers distinction on the object thus treated and indirectly upon its holder, for it is in a very real sense a part of himself. This relation of the owner to the weapon is not a social matter, but is really a secret between the two, though afterwards an occasion for public display. Very instructive in this connection is the delightful passage in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, in which, after the fight on board the ship, Alan Breck sets to work to make his 'Song of the Sword.' The impulse to the artistic expression is here absolutely individual. It is the enhanced personality of the 'bonny fighter' against odds that seethes in the innermost depths of the being till the artistic energy rises and becomes incorporate in form. This form is then as it were detached and becomes a social fact, giving renewed delight to its creator by the effect of it upon his fellows.[1]

In the case of the dance and song the applicability of the principle under discussion needs no demonstration. The simplest mode in which man can externalize himself in a form of expression is by gesture, and the dance begins, we have contended, in free bodily movements accompanied by cries that work off a mood of physical excitement. How pleasurable these are every person in vigorous health knows well, and such a one knows too how they stimulate the circulation, animate the torpid faculties and bring all the powers of the being into readiness for action.[2] The further elaboration of these movements into significant gesture and mimicry is accompanied by the same quickened sense of individuality. The playing of a part doubles in a way the personality. There is a consciousness of self held in common with that of the persona for the moment assumed, and the two act and react on each other.

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[1] The passage runs as follows:—'As he did so' [cleared the round-house of the corpses] 'he kept humming and singing and whistling to himself, like a man trying to recall an air; only what *he* was trying, was to make one. All the while, the flush was in his face, and his eyes were as bright as a five-year-old child's with a new toy. And presently he sat down upon the table, sword in hand; the air that he was making all the time began to run a little clearer, and then clearer still; and then he burst with a great voice into a Gaelic song. . . . He sang it often afterwards, and the thing became popular.'—*Kidnapped*, chapter x.

[2] 'Pleasure feeds and nurtures itself by expression.' 'Pleasure

The pleasure of imitation is still more marked when it results in a lasting production, like the sketch of the mammoth or the figure of the reindeer on the hilt. Whatever was the rational motive underlying the act, it is inconceivable that the delineation can have been accomplished without a reflex thrill of pleasure. In the first place there is an act of expression that has taken the form of a difficult achievement, and to every one his own work, an outcome of himself, gives delight. Aristotle noticed long ago that artists—he specially instances poets—love their own creations as if they were their children,[1] and in another place he refers to the delight in a piece of good imitation. The thing copied need not in itself, he says, be interesting, but when we compare the copy with the original and discern the one in the other the discovery of the likeness gives pleasure.[2] In the second place there is the accomplishment of something that gives to others a proof of our skill, and the bit of mammoth ivory or the dagger hilt becomes a trophy exalting its creator and possessor among his fellows.

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is always connected with an enhancement . . . of the vital functions.'—Hirn, *Origins*, pp. 41, 46.

[1] *Eth. Nic.*, ix. 7, 3.

[2] *Rhet.*, i. 11. 23.

§ 12. Bearing of this on the Doctrine of the Freedom of Art.

That these subjective feelings are real, and that they arise ever freshly in the mind on each repetition of the same or similar acts, is a doctrine that cannot be too often or too strongly asserted. The fact that the drawing answers from the very first the purpose of demonstration, and that in another state of society it may subserve other and more elaborate social ends, does not really alter the case. It is true that among modern savages the representation of natural objects, chiefly animals, is largely employed for those totemistic and magical functions to which so much attention is given by sociologists. It is however extremely doubtful whether anything of this kind existed in the days of quaternary man. From what we know of the savage of to-day it might be argued that the drawing of the mammoth was intended as a pledge of the re-appearance of the creature itself—that the drawing would attract the original by sympathetic magic within range of weapons; and again, on a similar basis of analogy, that there were men among the cave-dwellers with reindeer totems, and that they signed their implements with the totem mark, just as they seem to have scratched private signs of ownership on their utensils of bone.[1] Have we any justification however for throwing back into the millenniums of the pre-historic past the elaborate religious and mystical apparatus of modern savagery? In the opinion of the present writer any such interpretation of the drawings and carvings is exceedingly unlikely. We are accustomed to speak (as in these pages) of existing hunter tribes, like the aborigines of Australia, as being in a 'primitive' condition, but the term is only used relatively, for as a fact anything less 'primitive' in the strict sense than their elaborate ceremonials and beliefs cannot well be imagined. These represent no doubt a growth through long ages, but from how distant a date this has been going on we cannot tell. The animals seem to take the same common-sense view of the world that is taken by civilized man. Assuming the evolution of man from lower forms of life, when did this strange tangle of mystical beliefs begin to spring up in the humanized intelligence, and how far had it beset the once clear channels of the brain when the contemporaries of the mammoth and reindeer inhabited the plains of western France? In the absence of all evidence of the mental state of the cave-dwellers save their burial customs and their works of industry and art, there seems no reason to suppose them harassed by those apprehensions and prohibitions which must make a nightmare of life. The view here taken is supported by the authority of Grosse, who writes that 'as long as there is no proof'—[of any religious or magical character about the representations] 'and up to now we have seen no shadow of such a proof—so long we have simply no justification for explaining these figures as being anything else but what on the surface they appear to be.'[1] To put the matter in a form that will appeal to any practical artist, the work is too fresh too spirited too lifelike to be inspired by the deadening and enslaving notions that make up so large a part of the religion of the modern savage. Dr. Groos says that 'in the primitive arts of drawing and sculpture, so long as they serve no religious end, the pure pleasure of the worker in his own skill is the foremost element,' and he writes again of 'the joy in productive activity as such.'[2] This element, it is here contended, is uppermost in the strictly 'primitive' graphic and plastic imitation, and the fact that it is used from the first to convey information no more destroys this element than it is destroyed in the modern painter's work because he counts on the sale of it to pay the coal-bill.

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[1] *Reliquiæ Aquitanicæ*, pl. B. xxvii., etc.

§ 13. Form in Art: Importance in all its manifestations of the principle of Order.

The object of the foregoing has been to exhibit these initial activities that lead on to art, as grouped together under a single psychological principle. The account does not give in the strict logical sense their differentia, for there are other human activities of which much the same definition may be given, but which have no connection with art. They are not themselves necessarily artistic, but they lead on to art in the sense that they all represent the raw material, so to say, out of which the really artistic product is formed.

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[1] *Anfänge*, p. 191.

[2] *Die Spiele der Menschen*, pp. 570, 510.

They can only become artistic by the addition of another essential element, not present in play nor in the activity that simulates art of the animals, and this element may be described generally as Order, under which main idea are included such manifestations of the principle as Rhythm, Measure, Proportion, and all those modes of arrangement used by artists that may be summarized as Composition.

The psychology of this principle, that is to say the operation of it in the individual in regulating and defining the action, or product of the artistic impulse, is at least as interesting a subject of study as the psychology of the impulse itself, but into this subject there is no space to enter. Schiller uses a good phrase when he asks What is man before . . . the serene Form tames the wildness of life?[1] It is indeed one of the notable facts of human nature that in art this free pleasurable activity of self-expression obeys a certain inner control, that transforms it from a mere animal effervescence into a rational product of ordered parts in a clearly defined unity. This taming of the wildness of life is in progress from the beginning of human development. The controlling force is as constant and as powerful as is the motor force that gives the impulse to expression. The most conspicuous form in which it is exercised is that of Rhythm, of which Karl Bücher says that it is the one element of art for which all peoples have a natural sensibility.[1] It is the fundamental principle in music, for we are assured by Wallaschek that 'a general view of primitive music shows us that in the most primitive state the main constituent of music has always been rhythm while melody has remained an accessory . . . The most primitive music is no melody, but noise reduced to time.' As 'dancing and music are in fact one art of expression'[2] so Rhythm creates in the dance an art of form out of the free bodily movements, just as it makes an art of music out of a succession of noises. 'It is impossible' Hirn remarks 'to see anything artistic in the spectacle of a man leaping or shouting for joy,'[3] but the reduction of these to Measure is the beginning of an art that we shall see developed among the Greeks to one of great beauty and ethical significance.

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[1] 'Was ist der Mensch, ehe . . . die ruhige Form das wilde Leben besänftigt,' *Aesthetische Erziehung*, Brief 24, *Schriften*, ed. Goedeke, Theil x. p. 358.

The action of the same principle of Measure in another shape is operative in the arts of form proper, those, that is, of form in rest.

It is perhaps least in evidence in the case of the arts of delineation. Where natural forms are conventionalized for a decorative purpose, as in the reindeer hilt, we have of course an advanced application of the principle of Order. The representation of the natural object is controlled at every instant by considerations external to itself, and the fact that, in the instance referred to, these considerations have been so well apprehended and made effective, imparts to the work a real artistic value. Even in the naturalistic sketch, however, that form of primitive activity in which the working of the principle seems least apparent, we can find a trace of Order in the relation observed between the drawing and the space it has to occupy. Mere imitation of nature, like the mere caper and shout, is not in itself artistic, though it brings into existence the raw material of art. The imitation is only made artistic by the operation of the controlling law of Composition, and this already begins to work when a representation of nature has to go in a certain space. If the existing piece of ivory on which the mammoth is drawn be of the size it was originally—and this seems indicated by the circumstances of its discovery—then the arrangement of the drawing within its contour shows distinct artistic taste.

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[1] *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, p. 358.

[2] *Primitive Music, an inquiry into the Origin and Development of Music, Songs, Instruments, Dances, and Pantomimes of savage races*, London, 1893, pp. 291-4.

[3] *Origins*, p. 87.

In the case of bodily adornment, the universality and elaboration of this are not more remarkable than its just adaptation to the figure on which it is disposed. So well observed, as a rule, are the laws of good taste in decoration among even the most primitive folk, that Gottfried Semper thought that the canons of decorative art in general were formed upon the tradition established from the earliest times in this particular department. The relation of the band, the pendent, the crest, the mask, to the parts of the body encircled or accentuated or protected, is observed with so just a sense of structure and function that the principles of the art were in this way established for all time.[1] In the disposition of the elements of the ornamentation there is the same tact in alternation and grouping, and Grosse observes that the principle of rhythmical arrangement is no less common and conspicuous in the art of the lowest races than in that of the most civilized,[2] and the instinct for composing whatever decorative elements are present into a pattern is practically universal among men, while it is entirely unknown among animals. The pattern does not consist in the repetition of single forms but of combinations of forms, while in more advanced instances of artistic composition we find, as we shall see, not symmetry or mechanical regularity, but balance, and a harmony of parts not equal, but related to each other according to a more subtle scheme of proportion. Now it is impossible to credit the animals with a perception of order and arrangement of this kind, however well supplied they may be with the emotional excitement which leads to different forms of 'play.' Thus, the bird's song is just the free outpouring of lovely notes, exquisite in themselves and endeared through the poetic associations they arouse in us, but wanting the element of Time, and that accentuation of a measure so essential to the effect of music. Some species of birds will show delight in brightly-coloured objects, but they never go on to dispose these in such a way as to form a pattern. They will relieve a mood of strong excitement, as at pairing time, by curious gestures and contortions, by strutting up and down or running round in a ring, by soaring and then making a sudden drop,[1] and all the while utter their notes and cries, but no further step is made towards the evolution of that universal early form of human art—the rhythmical dance performed in unison with the rhythmical song. What is wanting no doubt is sufficient power of abstraction. It is evident that for the perception of the charm of alternation, of the regular recurrence of complex forms, and of periodical emphasis as in the dance or song, what is needed is a certain capacity in the intelligence of holding one impression for a while till another comes to companion it, and then making comparisons between them. The animal is too much at the mercy of the present sensation to be able in this way to retain impressions and compare them, and man is the only artist because he alone possesses the sense of Rhythm and Proportion. It will easily be seen that any quality which constitutes a distinct differentia between man and the animals is one that by its continued exercise will raise man higher and higher in the scale of civilization. The value of it in the development of the intellectual and moral nature is incalculable, and it is thus that 'the serene Form tames the wildness of life.'

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[1] *Ueber die formelle Gesetzmässigkeit des Schmuckes*, etc., 1856.

[2] *Anfänge*, p. 142.

§ 14. Social Institutions and the stimulus they afford to Art: the Festival.

No more space can here be devoted to the fascinating subject of the origin and earliest forms of the artistic activity of men. We must now proceed to trace the steps by which these primitive activities become disciplined to higher service among the civilized races of the ancient world.

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[1] Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, II. pp. 50, 74 f.

The consideration of art in its decorative aspects cannot be pursued here, or it might be shown how it advances from being a simple artistic expression of care for a person or object, till it has invested all the outward apparatus of civic, religious and national life with poetic associations and with beauty. All buildings and objects used by members of a family or brotherhood or state possessed in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome a distinctive character as connected with common celebrations, and their place in the life of the community was accentuated by decorative statues and reliefs, by the representation of sacred creatures and flowers, and by the significant device on warlike shield and standard or on the merchant's coin. To most people in modern times the objects that make up their material environment are mere 'things.' Cheap, abundant and without character, we use them and lose them and replace them without a thought. In old days they were few in number and proportionately prized. They lasted a lifetime and became as it were a part of their owner's personality; they descended from generation to generation and family piety made them sacred; they were tokens of the citizen's rank and office in the community and his patriotism warmed at their sight; or, lastly, as connected with religion they were the pledge of the protecting care of the deity of his clan or state. Art expressing or symbolizing all this through significant decorative forms, wove a spell around the material necessary objects to be found in every house or city. Over all there was a charm, a glamour of pious association, which carried something of the ideal excitement of art into every corner of the home and into every department of human activity.

In tracing the influence of social feeling when it sets in motion those waves of ideal sentiment that stir the mind to artistic expression, we quickly find ourselves in the presence of one of the most important institutions of which the history of civilization takes account. This institution is the Festival, the ideas and habits connected with which may be said among some peoples to have filled a large part of human life. It is indeed hardly too much to say that it is to the festival—family, communal, tribal—that almost all the forms of art known to ancient and medieval times owe their origin, or at least development, and so important does this make it for the proper comprehension of the art of old times, that some special pages must be devoted to the subject of the festal celebration in the classical and medieval worlds (§§ 23-31, and 48-60). Here it is sufficient to explain that though, naturally, its characteristic note is gladness, yet we must include under the same idea those celebrations of a mournful kind connected with death and sepulture. It is as the expression of common sentiment that we are chiefly concerned with the institution, and in this respect mortuary ceremonies, as especially affecting the family, are as germane to our present purpose as tribal or national thanksgivings, or the periodical feasts that divide the husbandman's year.

§ 15. The festal origin of graphic and plastic Decoration;

The very term 'festal celebration' implies on the one hand the stimulus to feeling of which we have already spoken, and on the other an impulse to attach the emotion aroused to the person or idea commemorated, and to embody it in some temporary or permanent outward form. Hence the constructor and the decorator, the graphic and the plastic artist had to be at hand at festival-tide to supply apparatus for the ceremony, and especially by their imitative skill to bring before the eyes of the people the similitude of the persons or the deeds of those in whose honour they were assembled. The painter in the earliest times was almost exclusively exercised upon tasks of this kind, and worked in close fellowship with the sculptor. Indeed the most general form of decoration in the ancient world, the painted relief, stands midway between painting and sculpture, partaking of the nature of both. It was the view of Gottfried Semper, explained in many passages of his book *der Stil*, that this form of decoration was only a copy of embroidered or figured stuffs employed from the earliest period for similar purposes. These products of the textile craft would be used for the temporary clothing of festal structures, and would exhibit, in gaily coloured designs, forms and objects significant of the purpose of the celebration. The carved paintings or painted carvings, which cover the walls of Egyptian temples and run as a dado round the rooms of Assyrian palaces, certainly do resemble textile products, and give a colour to Semper's theory. They are at any rate thoroughly festal in feeling—a gay and varied show, representing the glories of the gods and the deeds of kings or the departed great ones of the earth. Work of this kind in low relief is not properly sculpture, and to sculpture proper belongs a somewhat different character.

§ 16. and of monumental Sculpture;

When sculpture is not confined to decorative functions or to the mere imitation of nature, it assumes a monumental or commemorative character on which a word may be said in passing. It is obvious that to set up a monument to a deity or to a human being is a different thing from merely perpetuating his real or supposed lineaments. It implies not a record only, but the expression of honouring regard, and a claim upon future generations that they will share, or at any rate respect, the feeling thus perpetuated. This character, attaching not to all but to many of the most important works of sculpture produced in ancient times, possesses significance for the theory of the art in general which must be left for treatment to a subsequent page. The same feeling receives so much more potent an expression in the monument of *Architecture* that it is in connection with this art that it will best be noticed here.

§ 17. and especially of Architecture.

It is to the festal celebration that we must look for the origin of many distinctive features of this most imposing of the arts of form. Architecture may seem at first sight to stand on a different footing from the other arts and to originate, not in any impulse towards self-externalization, or towards expression of any kind, but in operations of use and necessity, the construction of the shelter and the defence. But it is by no means sufficient to explain architecture as the addition of artistic form and decoration to utilitarian structures. It is true, as we shall see, that the artistic effect of architecture is intimately related to, though not always entirely dependent on, the considerations of use which furnish a sort of program of its operations, but at the same time the whole spirit of the art is opposed to the idea of complete subordination to utility. As a matter of fact, a glance at the early history of the art in Egypt, Babylonia and Greece, during those all-important periods when so many of its normal forms were being fixed for after-time, exhibits to us architecture as far more an art of free expression than a merely utilitarian craft. The buildings which in these remote periods gave architecture the character that it has ever since retained, were not houses or ramparts, but Temples, Palaces and Tombs—structures for show rather than for utility, though serving at the same time (generally only in a part of them) a practical purpose.

That characteristic of architecture which we express by the term 'monumental,' the dignity of imposing mass and rock-like stability, of awful height and far-extended breadth, belongs as a rule to its ideal not its utilitarian side. Only perhaps in the case of military architecture do we find this æsthetic quality directly due to use. A fortress is only really effective when it presents an impenetrable, unscalable barrier to advance, and hereby it impresses the imagination with a look of power. In the palace-fortress, however, represented by Assyrian monuments, and by structures like the Papal palace at Avignon, or the Pitti at Florence, there is a more direct æsthetic appeal. It houses and protects its lord, but at the same time announces, in very insistent affirmation, his greatness.

§ 18. The ideal character of the earliest permanent monuments.

Among the relics left by prehistoric man the grandest and the most mysterious are those huge monoliths or groups of monoliths known generally as 'Rude Stone Monuments.' Putting these apart, the existence of the cave-dwellers, the lake-dwellers, the hunters of the primeval forests, is only known to us by a few slight remnants here and there of bones or artistically wrought implements or potsherds emerging from the refuse-heaps; but these 'Menhirs' and 'Cromlechs' and 'Dolmens' of imperishable stone, often sublime by their very size and weight, and pregnant with a meaning which to us must ever remain obscure—these are memorials of a very different stamp. Who reared them we know not. Some find in them so strong a family likeness, wherever they appear, that they are fain to regard them as a creation of one people or family of peoples and as belonging to one definite period in the remote history of humanity, while others look on them as marking merely a particular stage of nascent civilization recurring at different times among different races in most parts of the globe.[1] Of their object we can only conjecture. They have been regarded as temples and as tombs, but as the tomb is of immeasurably greater antiquity than the temple, it is a far safer hypothesis to treat them as for the most part sepulchral, and though this is doubtful in the case of the Menhir (from Breton Méan, Men, 'stone,' and Hîr, 'long') and the Cromlech (from Kroumm 'curved' and Lec'h 'stone'), the Dolmen (from Taol, Tôl, 'table' and Méan, Men, 'stone')[2]—sometimes actually found in the heart of a mound or tumulus of earth—was certainly a funeral chamber, while the 'alignement' or avenue of upright stones bordering a causeway, as at Carnac in Brittany, might mark out an imposing approach to the abode of death. But whatever they are, their makers were men of an extended vision that could embrace the distant future, men strong and determined to do a work that should endure. We cannot gaze up at these rugged memorials of hoariest antiquity without feeling them to be the expression of some great idea that once filled the minds of their creators. We need not speculate upon the nature of this idea—a hazardous though fascinating theme—for all we want from these Rude Stone Monuments is evidence that at a very early date in the history of humanity men felt an impulse to embody the faith that was in them in some vast and enduring structure, a thing not for material use, but a witness to such spiritual conceptions as the Family Idea or the indestructibility of the human Intelligence. So out of the performance of funeral rites—a family celebration, and in the larger sense of the word a festival—proceeds the desire for the permanent expression of the thought that filled every heart, and with the satisfaction of this desire, monumental architecture, and not only this, but monumental sculpture also are born.

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[1] See for these two divergent views respectively Du Cleuziou, *La Création de l'Homme*, Paris, 1887, with the authors there referred to, and Lord Avebury, *Pre-Historic Times*, 6th ed. Lond. 1900, Chapter v.

[2] Le Gonidec, *Dictionnaire Breton-Français*, Saint-Brieuc, 1850, s.vv.

§ 19. Survival of the spirit of the earliest monuments in later Architecture and Sculpture.

For though, as we shall see, the Rude Stone Monument is not in a technical sense the beginning of architecture—this art owing its actual forms to other sources—and though as compared with the speaking image in a statue the rough stone is but dumbly symbolic, yet all great architecture, and all great sculpture too, borrow something of the spell that works here so potently. There is in fine sculpture an indescribable remoteness and dignity. There is something megalithic, primeval, in the aspect of the noblest buildings of all times. Every architect worthy of the name will catch the same spirit. Give him an opportunity and allow him to create in freedom, and every architect worthy of the name will build for an idea, will build massively and build for ever, and a part not the least noble of this first of the arts will descend to it from the far-distant and unknown creators of Stonehenge and Carnac.

§ 20. The festal character of early Architecture shown in the Egyptian Temple;

No illustration of the festal character of early architectural monuments is more apt for our purpose than the Egyptian temple. Nowhere do we see more clearly how little in these vast early structures was utilitarian in origin, how much was designed, carried out and adorned in the spirit of Art. The Egyptian temple (Fig. 1) comprised a whole collection of courts and halls and chambers open or secluded, and might cover altogether as much as ten acres of ground. It consisted however essentially of two parts, one simple and unpretending but clothed with the highest religious importance, the other unimportant in its religious aspect but imposing through material size and splendour. The one part was made up of a stupendous portal itself approached between avenues of sculptured figures, of immense open courts (A) surrounded with colonnades, of pillared halls (B) vast enough in plan to take in a northern cathedral, and of various chambers of a more secret and secluded aspect. These were all arranged on the long axis of the whole rectangular group of buildings, so that those who entered were invited to traverse them in a straight line towards the further end of the whole edifice

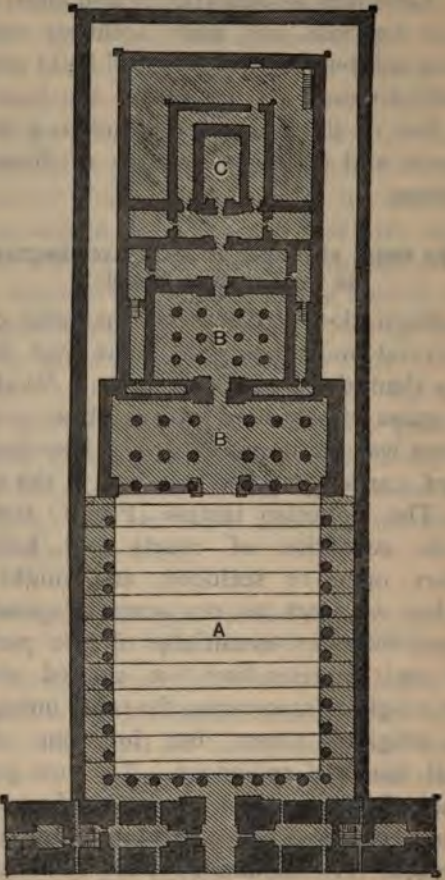

Fig. 1.—Plan of Egyptian Temple (Edfou).

Here at last would have been found the other division of the temple—consisting only of a small unlighted untenanted shrine (C), no larger than an ordinary modern room, within which were preserved in an ark or coffer certain sacred symbols of the deity. This only was the Temple proper—the structure, that is to say, really needed and used for the safe keeping of the fetish. All the rest, avenue, portal, columned court and pillared hall, in all their extent and majesty, were merely designed for show, to provide a fitting and impressive approach that should strike the imagination of the worshipper and fill his soul with reverence and awe (Fig. 1 and Plate II).

Through a fortunate circumstance we are able to get behind these elaborate constructions, and learn the arrangements which preceded them in respect to the shrine and its furnishing forth. The pictures in the Egyptian hieroglyphic writing supply us with minute but extremely spirited delineations of structures and objects which may have been familiar to the inhabitants countless generations earlier than the erection of the tombs and temples that remain to us. Among these pictures are one or two representing small huts or arbours of rustic work in the form given in Fig. 2. These, we learn, are shrines of the gods, and they represent doubtless the original shape of the sacred chamber, which remained to all time as

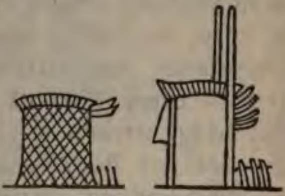

FIG. 2.—Early Egyptian Shrines, from hieroglyphic inscriptions.

the heart and kernel of the vast temples of a Seti or a Ramses. The technical construction of these early shrines, of timber and wattle-work, has points of interest that will be noticed on a subsequent page (§ 144), but their general form and equipment are highly significant for our present purpose. Religious worship, it need not be said, is infinitely older than the permanent temple, and for its performance all that was needed was a gathering of the pious at a sacred spot about a rustic altar, to which might be added a movable ark or a fixed hut or canopy for the safe keeping of any totem, fetish or apparatus of secret mummery belonging to the local divinity. Given such a permanent structure, the approach to it would be specially hallowed ground and fenced off from profane tread. Any simple device such as a lofty flagstaff would be adopted to give it importance from afar, and on the occasion of the festival every kind of decoration in the form of fluttering streamers, branches of green trees, garlands of flowers, would be lavished on the building and its approaches. Here in the early Egyptian shrine, we see at the entrance two lofty flagstaffs, and in front the indication of a palisade, evidently marking off the hallowed precinct or 'temenos.' The only thing not shown is accommodation for the 'Ædituus,' or guardian of the shrine and its contents, but he probably lived in the hut itself, just as in the early record contained in Exodus xxxiii. 11, Joshua lives as Ædituus in the tent-sanctuary which contained the ark or holy coffer of the Israelite nomads.

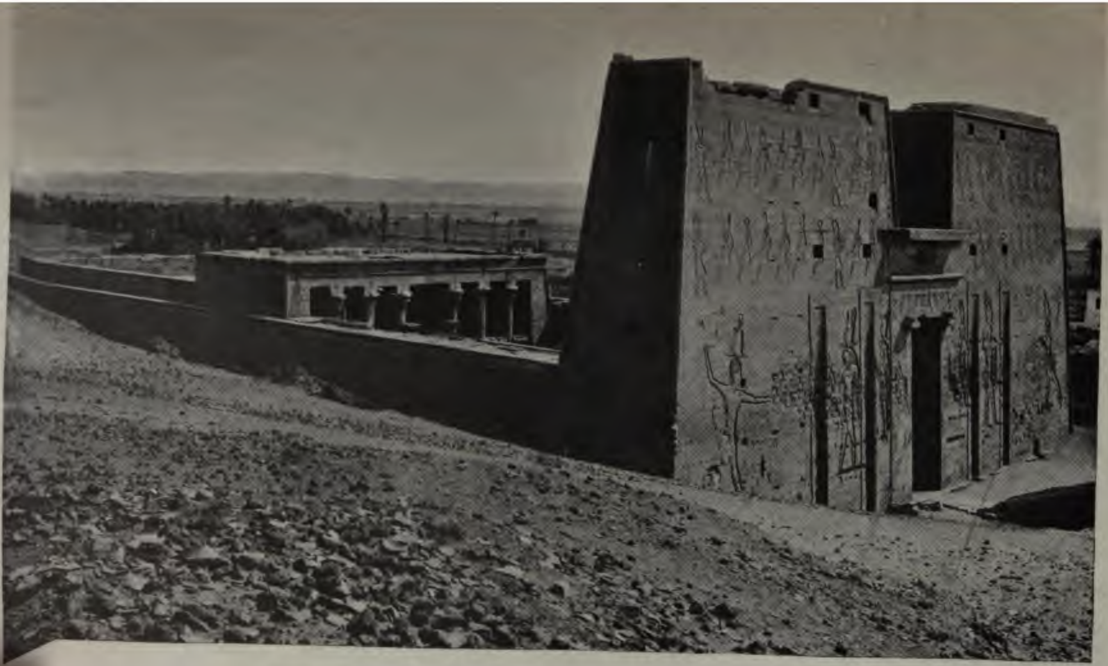

Plate II. To face p. 58.

Portal and Court of Temple at Edfou, Egypt.

Now it will be recognized that we have here, reduced to their simplest terms, just the same elements that went to make up the vast complexus of the monumental temples of Thebes or Abydos. The shrine remained as it had been, though now wrought in stone. The chambers round about it in the hinder portions of the temple were lodgings of the priests and storerooms for the offerings of the faithful; the courts and columned halls were merely developments of the palisaded enclosure. The flagstaffs actually remained till the latest times erect on each side of the single entrance to the temple, though the idea of them was still further carried out in monumental fashion by the rearing of two vast and almost completely solid masses of masonry of tower-like form, called after their Greek name 'Pylons,' that flanked the gateway and gave the desired imposing aspect to the approach towards the shrine (Plate II).

§ 21. and in the Temple of the Greeks.

A very similar account might be given of what is perhaps the most important monument in the whole history of architecture—the Greek Temple (Plate III). We are unfortunately unable to trace its development so clearly as is the case with the temple of Egypt, but it is evident from the very sparing references thereto in Homer,[1] that it was a comparatively late addition to the apparatus of Hellenic worship. What that worship was in the older days we can readily imagine—days when the dwellers in the

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[1] In Homer the gods are all well provided with sacred enclosures (τεμένη) and smoking open-air altars (βωμοί) but few with shrines (νηοί). Athene has a νηός in Troy (*Il.* vi. 88) and at Athens (*Il.* ii. 549), and Apollo in Troy (*Il.* v. 445) in Chryse (*Il.* i. 39) and, apparently, at Delphi (*Od.* viii. 79).

> 'little town by river or sea-shore,
> Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,'

met around the woodland altar and with garland and dance and hymn and music of pipe, gave up their souls to festal enjoyment. At Olympia, for example, long before there were any permanent buildings on the spot, there existed an open-air altar to Zeus in the midst of a sacred grove, whither came the folk from far and near to consult the local oracle, to sacrifice and to play, and on the trees of which they hung little votive images—portraits often of themselves—by which the god should remember them for good when they were away.[1] The permanent buildings added later-on were of the same character as the Egyptian—treasure-houses, shrines and monumental structures designed to give dignity and importance to the place. The treasure-houses at Olympia were separate from the shrines, though within the sacred enclosure and so under protection of the local deities. The shrines themselves, though at first they may have been like those of Egypt, or like the Hebrew Temple, secret chambers forbidden to the vulgar, became in historical times open and reasonably accessible places, of the character rather of museums for

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[1] Adolf Boetticher, *Olympia, das Fest und seine Stätte*, Berlin, 1883, p. 163 ff.

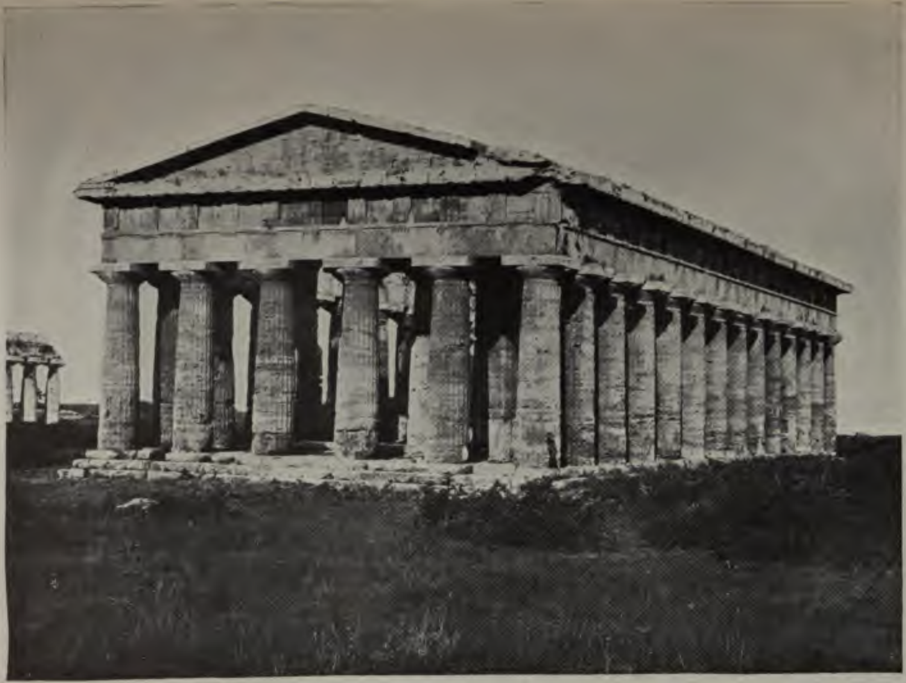

PLATE III. To face p. 60.

costly and beautiful works of art in the shape of statues and votive offerings, than secluded haunts of Divinity; while to give them due artistic embellishment they were surrounded by a ring of columns bearing a roof and forming with it a sort of canopy of honour. Instead of laying out columned courts and halls *preceding* the shrine, as in Egypt, the Greeks threw their colonnades *round* the shrine, and secured in this way a far more compact and artistic arrangement. The root-idea is however the same—architecture providing some imposing permanent apparatus for the religious festival, and in so doing taking on itself the same festal character as an art of free expression like the rest.[1]

§ 22. Tabular view of the beginnings of the Arts.

It remains now to draw out in a simple table, given on page 62, such a scheme of the beginnings of the arts as may correspond to the considerations here adduced. In such a matter absolute logical clearness is not to be obtained, or only to be obtained by the suppression of inconvenient facts, and it will suffice if the scheme show a general correspondence with the evidence of the primitive activities of art already passed in review. The scheme is arranged somewhat after the manner of the multiplication table, the two elements already spoken of being shown as combining to produce the different forms of art. The raw material of art, or, if the metaphor be preferred, the motive

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[1] For the festal origin of architecture, consult Semper, *der Stil*, especially 1, p. 258 ff. 'das Tapezierwesen der Alten.'

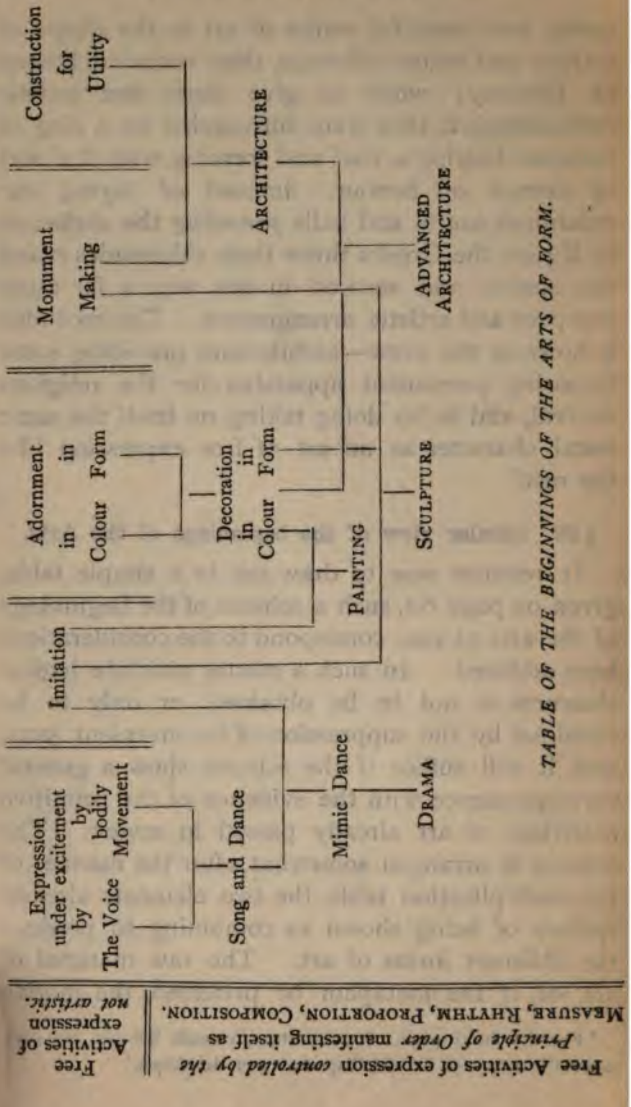
Free Activities of expression not artistic.
Expression under excitement by The Voice
by bodily Movement
Imitation
Adornment in Colour
in Form
Monument Making
Construction for Utility
Free Activities of expression controlled by the Principle of Order manifesting itself as Measure, Rhythm, Proportion, Composition.
Song and Dance
Mimic Dance
Decoration in Colour
in Form
Architecture
Drama
Painting
Sculpture
Advanced Architecture

TABLE OF THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ARTS OF FORM.

power in artistic production of which we have formed an idea in earlier sections, may be described as 'activities of self-externalization, or more simply, activities of expression, not artistic.'

At the left hand is placed the controlling regulative principle of 'Order' in its various manifestations, and it is not till this brings its influence to bear on the 'Activities' that we begin to get forms of art. Thus mere expression by voice or gesture, or mere aimless adornment with dabs or scratches is not art, but the Song and the Dance and Decoration in colour and form are artistic, because in them the indispensable second element is already apparent. From this point the scheme explains itself. The instinct of imitation, operating simultaneously with the impulse to the song and dance, leads at once to the Mimic Dance accompanied, as the dance always is accompanied in early times, by rhythmical chant. From this a rapid process of development results under conditions to be presently noticed (§ 30) in that important form of highly advanced art—the Drama. Meanwhile Imitation—not in itself artistic—combines with other elements to produce new forms of art. Decoration (that is to say adornment made artistic) in colour and in form, with the addition of the imitation of nature, produces the arts of Painting and of Sculpture, but in the case of some forms at any rate of the latter an additional monumental quality attaches to it (§ 19), and it must be held to borrow a share of that which is, as we have seen, the chief ingredient in architecture. Lastly Architecture herself springs partly from the instinct of monument-making and partly from a utilitarian source, and only rises to the dignity of an art when governed by the principle of proportion. Though this is all that is essential to the art, yet it derives so much added beauty and significance from a union with the sister arts of form, that we may make a final division by uniting it as Advanced Architecture with decoration in form and colour.

CHAPTER II

THE FESTIVAL, IN ITS RELATION TO THE FORM AND SPIRIT OF CLASSICAL ART

§ 23. The Festival as the nurse of Art

THE source of art in a condition of ideal excitement in which the individual, externalizing himself in expression, is carried out of the circle of his ordinary existence; the contagious nature of this excitement as it is developed and intensified in the festival, and the consequent stimulus to all forms of artistic production, have already been briefly indicated.

It was not only that the festival gave new tasks to the constructive artist in the temporary apparatus and permanent monument, in the recording picture or glorifying statue, and in all the thousand forms of symbolic or decorative art invoked to aid; but it called the artist, so to say, into being, gave him breath and nurture, surrounded him with moving forms and glowing colours, and with everything that could quicken the activity of eye and hand. Under the forcing atmosphere of the festival the plant of art shot up apace. Every one was to some extent an artist, for every one could at any rate move in the rhythmical cadence of the dance, and could in general accompany such movement by a rhythmical chant. The dance and song are at once the earliest and the most universal of all the forms of art connected with the festival and claim a word in this place.

§ 24. The festal Dance among savages;

The dance we have seen to be the art par excellence of the uncivilized races of to-day, and their performances, partly mimetic and partly to all appearance simply gymnastic, are described in the chapter on the dance in Professor Grosse's already cited volume.[1] With these in themselves there is no space to deal. Our concern is with the classical dance in its relation to the art of sculpture, and it only needs to be noticed that the celebrations we read of in Homer and Herodotus in Plato and Pausanias, or watch to-day in southern lands where classical tradition still lingers, are only more refined and graceful forms of the Australian corroborri or the displays described by travellers among the Bushmen or Eskimo.

Here is a specimen passage from the narrative of an African explorer that exhibits a primitive festal rite, as it has probably been performed from time immemorial under similar circumstances. 'The 23rd was spent by all the people of the plain country as a thanksgiving day, and the Bavira women met at the camp to relieve their joy at their deliverance from their inveterate enemy with dancing and singing which lasted from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Each woman and child in the dance circles was decked with bunches of green leaves in front and rear, and was painted with red clay, while their bodies were well smeared with butter. The dance was excellent and exciting and not ungraceful, but the healthy vocal harmony was better. The young warriors circled round the female dancers and exhibited their dexterity with the spear.'[1]

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[1] *Die Anfänge der Kunst*, viii Capitel, der Tanz.

§ 25. **and among modern and ancient Greeks.**

A picture almost exactly similar, drawn from the practice of a more civilized modern race, has been supplied by Mr. Theodore Bent, who resided in the Grecian Cyclades, where if anywhere in the Hellas of our own time old customs remain unchanged, and who found dancing still in some places a passion among the people. At Naxos, he tells us 'one of their local dances, here called the *tirlà*, is interesting, being danced by men and women in a semicircle, with their hands on each other's shoulders . . . the charm of it is the singing, which the dancers carry on in parts as they move to the time of a *syravlion* or drum.'[2] Mr. Bent noticed that this figure was really only a survival of a famous old Greek dance, as ancient as Homer and described by Lucian under the title of the Chain (ὅρμος). In the 'Shield of Achilles' episode in the *Iliad*[3] occurs the well-known description of the youths and fair maidens circling hand in hand, the girls flower-crowned, the youths with golden swords in silver belts, and following each other as lightly as runs the potter's wheel; while Lucian in his dialogue *On Dancing* describes the same sort of figure as familiar in his own day, in the second century of our era. 'The Chain is a dance in common of youths and maidens, linked one to another in order like a flexible band. The youth leads the round with the step of an athlete footing it as he will afterwards foot it in war, while the girl follows with steps trained in all maidenly decorum, so that the chain is woven of valour and modesty.'[1]

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[1] Stanley, *In Darkest Africa*, Lond. 1890, II. p. 120.

[2] *The Cyclades*, Lond. 1885, p. 366.

[3] Book xviii. *ad fin*.

§ 26. Characteristics of the ancient Dance as a form of Art.

The dances here described are of the simplest kind, the most direct artistic outcome of physical excitement, springing from some definite cause or merely from abounding bodily vigour. The Greeks, whose special gift it was to develop to the utmost perfection of form all media of artistic expression, evolved from these beginnings a number of elaborate figure dances, as well as other forms of art based essentially on the dance, and at the same time made this a stepping stone to the more advanced branches of sculpture. In Greece the dance became a mode of artistic expression at once free and varied and beautiful.[2]

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[1] *De Saltatione*, § 12.

[2] Emmanuel, *La Danse Grecque Antique d'après les Monuments*

The dance indeed as a form of art lacks permanence, but when it is reduced to a system it can be repeated at will in the same outward show. In all but permanence it is like sculpture, the presentation of the beautiful human form in gestures and positions that may be of the most graceful and expressive kind, and deserves the appellation the Germans have given it of 'bewegte Plastik,' sculpture in motion. Beauty was secured in the old Greek dances first through the actual physical comeliness of the performer, and next through the smoothness and rhythm of his controlled and calculated movements. Lucian demands for the dancer a figure like the 'Canon' of Polycleitus—a typical representation in sculpture of the youthful athletic form; he must be 'nicely finished off at every point, fair of mien, full of grace and symmetry, nowhere wanting, never less than himself.'[1] Such natural graces would be trained and developed to the utmost by the exercises of the gymnasium, and by the ennobling physical and moral effect of complete exposure in heroic nudity, as when the youthful Sophocles danced naked, lyre in hand, at the head of the triumphal choir after Salamis. At Lacedæmon at any rate the same care was spent on the physical culture of the girls, who also danced and exercised and raced in short tunics like that of the charming girl-runner of the Vatican Gallery,[2]

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figurés, Paris, 1896, gives an analysis of the different poses and movements of the Greek dance.

[1] *De Saltatione*, § 81.

[2] Cast at South Kensington, and in the Dundee Museum.

while if it was only at Sparta that the fair maidens sported with bare breast and limbs, there were in every part of Greece professional female dancers and flute players of unsurpassed bodily grace, whose performances we may judge of from pictures like Fig. 3, copied from an unpublished vase in the British Museum.

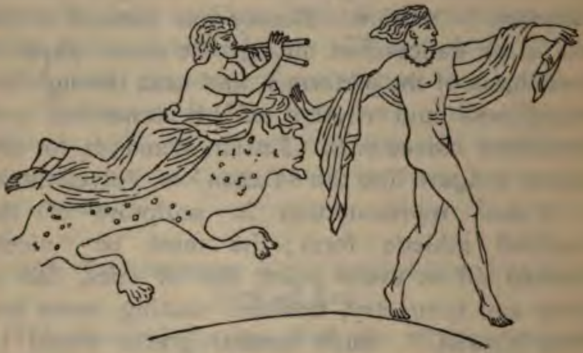

FIG. 3.—Female Dancer, from Greek Vase.

Interest in bodily loveliness found an outcome in certain contests of beauty (καλλιστεῖα) held in different places, about which we unfortunately know little more than the fact of their existence. The Scholiast on Homer, *Iliad* ix. 129 says, 'the Lesbians hold a contest of beauty among the women in the precinct of Hera,' and Athenæus mentions a similar institution in Arcadia,[1] while the Eleans had a contest of beauty for men, in which the handsomest were selected to carry the sacrificial vessels in the festival of Athene.[2]

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[1] *Deipnosophistæ*, xiii. § 90.

[2] Athenæus, *ibid.* § 20.

Certain καλλιστεῖα of a more private kind are described in the *Epistles* of Alciphron.

§ 27. Influence of the Dance on Sculpture.

The effect upon the study of sculpture of this cultivation and free exposure of the body may easily be understood. The artist would hardly need professional models, when the beautiful highly-trained human form both of man and woman, not in rest only but also in motion, was so freely displayed before his eyes. The close connection between the pose and movement of the living form and its crystallization in marble or bronze was noticed by the ancients, and Athenæus remarks that there were 'relics and traces of the ancient dancing in some statues made by statuaries of old, on which account men at that time paid more attention to moving their limbs with graceful gestures.'[1] Moreover it was not only abstract beauty of form that the sculptor had before his eyes, but that beauty schooled to decorous and expressive movement. Damon the Athenian, as quoted by Athenæus, affirmed that 'the poets originally arranged dances for freeborn men, and employed figures only to be emblems of what was being sung, always preserving in them the principles of nobility and manliness.' 'If any one,' he continued, 'while dancing, indulged in unseemly postures or figures, and did nothing at all corresponding to the songs sung he was considered blameworthy. . . . For the dance is a display at once of the care the dancers bestowed on their persons and also of good discipline.'[1] Greek feeling for decorum forbade anything sudden or strained in gesture, and as much care was taken over the composition of the limbs of the dancer as the statuary expends on the artistic arrangement of his figure. The studied posture-dance was thus a more advanced form of art than the mere rhythmical swing of limb and body, and was held by the Greeks to have a high educational value for the performer. Thus the primitive romp and caper of armed youths was taken up and systematized under the name of the Pyrrhic dance at Sparta, where it was used as an exercise for war, and consisted of feigned attack and defence and the like, all executed in time to music

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[1] *Ibid.* xiv. § 26.

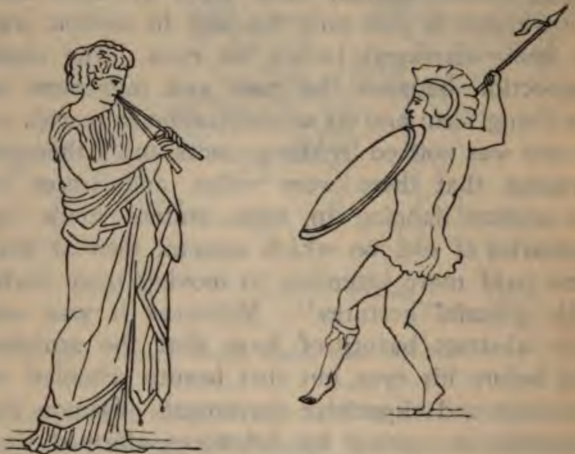

FIG. 4.—Dance of Armed Youth, from a Greek Vase.

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[1] Athenæus, *ibid.* § 25.

(Fig. 4). The Spartan boys had their special dance (called γυμνοπαιδία) which they performed naked with movements of the whole frame according strictly with the music. Educational too were the choral celebrations of the Laconian girls, wherein, as Aristophanes sings, there was 'the sound of dancing, while like young fillies the maidens on the banks of the Eurotas rapidly moved their feet, and their hair floated back like the tresses of revelling Bacchanals.'[1] The Spartans indeed, Lucian says generally, did everything with the Muses, and their youths learned to dance just as they learned to fight.[2]

§ 28. The mimic Dances.

In the style of dancing here described there is already an element of imitation, for the gestures have to be 'emblems of what is being sung,' but this element is developed still further in those kinds of dances which are specially of a mimic order. The mimic dance is a form of savage art of a very primitive type, but the genius of the Greeks moulded it into that elaborate and noble artistic product the Attic drama. The drama, tragic and comic, as we shall presently see, was evolved out of a mass of popular performances in which the human figure was made to present a series of solemn or ridiculous ideas. Such exhibitions at festal-tide were wanting in the stately dignity so characteristic of the higher manifestations of Hellenic art, but displayed abundant action and variety. They were less regular less beautiful less purely artistic than the simpler dances that depended only on the display of lovely forms and poses, but they were kept within our definition of art by their strict obedience to the measure marked by the musical accompanist. Were we not expressly informed of the fact, we should have doubted whether these complex pantomimic movements could have been actually performed to music. There is no doubt, however, that music, and hence rhythmical measure, were always present. The best idea of these dances in their comparatively rude and popular form we derive from a passage in Xenophon's *Anabasis* or Expedition of the Ten Thousand, describing a banquet given by the officers of the Greek army to the chief men of a district in Asia Minor that they were traversing. After the feast the soldiers entertained their guests as follows. 'As soon as the libations had been poured out and the pæan sung, two Thracians rose up and danced in full armour to the sound of a pipe; they bounded into the air with the utmost agility brandishing their swords, till at last one struck the other in such a manner that every one thought he had killed him. He then despoiled the vanquished of his arms and went out singing a triumphal lay (the "Sitalces"), while other Thracians came forward and carried off the man as if he had been dead, though indeed he had suffered no hurt. Afterwards some Ænians and men of Magnesia stood up, and danced what they called the Carpæan dance, in heavy armour. The order of the dance is as follows. One man having laid aside his arms feigns to be sowing a field and to drive along a yoke of oxen, frequently turning to look back as if he were afraid. A robber then approaches, and the husbandman, when he perceives him, snatches up his arms, dashes to meet him, and fights with him in defence of his yoke of oxen, all these movements being performed by the men while keeping time to the music of the pipe. At last, however, the robber, binding the other man, leads him off with his oxen.'[1] Sometimes, Xenophon adds, the dance ends differently; the ploughman binds the robber, and then, having fastened him to his oxen, drives him off with his hands tied behind him.

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[1] *Lysistrata, ad fin.*

[2] *De Saltatione*, § 10.

§ 29. Effect of the mimic Dances upon Sculpture and Painting.

Lifelike impersonations of this kind, moulded to a form of art by the element of measure and rhythm, must have proved an inexhaustible source of suggestion to the graphic and plastic artists, who would have before them examples of the conveyance of ideas in a vivid and forcible manner by means of bodily gesture and facial expression alone, without the intervention of the voice. It was essential to accomplishment in this kind of dancing, that the idea to be impressed on the spectator should be read in every part of the form and not in a single feature or limb.[2] The dancer, in Lucian's view, 'must study clearness so that he may make everything plain without an interpreter, and as the Pythian Oracle said, the spectator of a dance should understand a mute and hear one that does not speak.'[1]

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[1] *Anabasis*, vi. i.

[2] Xenophon, *Symposium*, ii. 16.

§ 30. Evolution of the Drama from the mimic Dance.

More elaborate forms of the mimic dance were also introduced at the religious festivals of the Greeks, where they took the character of sacred pantomimes displaying the persons and the adventures of the deities celebrated in the locality. The most important of these pantomimes in its artistic results was that connected with the festivals of the wine-god Dionysus, wherein were represented dances of satyrs his woodland comrades, and where would appear also at times the god himself, or at any rate a messenger from him who would recount and re-enact his adventures. This was originally a mere incident in a scene of village jollity at vintage time, but, strangely enough, was developed in after days to that sustained and stately form of art the Tragic Drama. Nothing could appear more unlike a haunt of rustic merrymakers than the Athenian Theatre, when assembled Greece saw

> 'Gorgeous tragedy
> In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
> Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
> Or the tale of Troy divine;'

and it is not easy to see how the Dionysiac Revel could be turned in so short a space of time to a performance so solemn and elevated, in which only a few accidental features remained to tell of its origin in the masque of satyrs. The difficulty is explained when we understand the prevalence of the mimic dance or pantomime in many different forms throughout Greece. The themes of these were not necessarily Dionysiac, but embraced various mythological stories and brought upon the rustic stage both divine and heroic personages. Lucian says that the whole range of ancient legend 'from Chaos to Cleopatra of Egypt'[1] was pressed into the service of the dancers, and we have a long list of dramatic dances performed in early times, as for example, the birth of Zeus in Crete, the marriage of Zeus and Hera at Argos, the battle of Apollo and the Python at Delphi. At Tanagra there was represented Hermes Kriophoros, Apollo with the Muses in the Theban Daphnephoria, at Sicyon the hero Adrastus and his adventures. Had tragedy been directly evolved from any of these more serious displays there would have been nothing surprising, but their influence seems to have been only indirect. We may conjecture however that it was the familiarity of the people with mimic dances and shows of a solemn kind, that made it possible for Epigenes of Sicyon and Thespis of Athens to graft these on to the Dionysiac fêtes in Attica, and so gradually to change the whole character of the representation. That this was not done without some popular opposition we know from the cry that was raised against these innovators—'This has nothing to do with Dionysus' (*οὐδέν πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον*).[2]

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[1] *De Saltatione*, § 62.

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[1] *De Saltatione*, § 37.

[2] See Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte*, Vol. III. with passages there referred to. Esp. p. 268.

§ 31. Slight influence of the Drama on Sculpture.

The drama is itself an art of form and as such claims mention in this place; it stood however by itself and had little influence on the other arts. Neither the sculptor nor the painter seems to have learned much from this source, the reason being, no doubt, that the adjuncts of the drama, the robes, the masks, the buskins, were elaborate and cumbersome, and militated against anything like pure beauty of form. Lucian, in fact, when extolling the dance as a form of art, criticises the stage performances from this very point of view. In language which may be half banter, he ridicules the gigantic figures padded out in front and propped up on lofty buskins, that roared forth their verses through masks of which the open mouths seemed ready to swallow the audience![1] Probably the less developed mimic performances had far more effect upon the progress of the plastic art. The introduction upon the country stage of the personages of mythology duly 'made up' in mien and vesture and attribute, familiarized the people with representations, which they were afterwards to behold carried up into an altogether higher region of beauty and of expression in the productions of the sculptor's art. In this way, then, the social customs and common religious rites of the ancient people all 'made for art' supplying the indispensable stimulus to feeling without which there would be no impulse to artistic expression, educating the artist's eye by the display of fair forms amid scenes of brightness and excitement, setting sculptor, painter and architect at work on abundant and congenial tasks.

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[1] *De Saltatione*, § 27.

§ 32. Early Sculpture in its relation to the Festival.

Nor were the artists slow to take advantage of their opportunities. From the midst of the sacred groves or from the bare rock of the citadels, wherever the sons of Hellas had gathered together in town or village, there arose noble buildings adorned or surrounded by stately sculptured forms. These temples, so fair and massive, we have already come to know as the crystallization in permanent form of the festal structure (§ 21), and we have noted how the decorative arts soon came to lend their aid in covering the bones of the edifice with a veil of significant and beautiful devices (§§ 14, 15). It is true that the earliest Greek temples were comparatively bare of sculpture, but the place of this was doubtless supplied by temporary decoration upon festal occasions. When sculpture and painting came to be added as permanent elements in the effect of the whole, they were at first naïve and simple enough. The people were greedy for stories about local gods and heroes, and loved to see these brought before their eyes either as part of a pageant or play, or in the form of a substantial artistic show. Childlike in the extreme were the early efforts of the plastic art, when the temple-image was nothing more than a large wooden doll dressed in real clothes and a wig, and the decorative frieze or slab represented scenes of sacred legend with figures of the quaintest mien and habiliments. To the popular heart however both statue and decorative relief were very dear. The crude realism of the one, the animated, even grotesque, gestures of the actors in the other, were easily understood and appreciated, and so well were they loved that, partly on artistic partly on religious grounds, they remained in honour throughout the whole period of classical art history. Pausanias, though he wrote in the second century of our era and was familiar with all the greatest achievements of Hellenic art, declares that in spite of their strange ungainliness these earliest productions had in them 'something that was divine.'[1]

§ 33. Mature Sculpture also in Greece the expression of popular ideals.

Widely different from these in aspect and idea are the standard examples of Greek sculpture in its maturity, such as we possess in the fragments from the Parthenon. Monumental dignity even austerity of aspect marks these colossal shapes, in which we read the deepest thoughts of the people about man and about divinity, and the contrast between these and the naïve representations of the infancy of the art is much the same as that between the Attic drama in the hands of an Æschylus, and the primitive Dionysiac revel out of which it was evolved. There is no need to trace here the historical development of sculpture from its beginnings to its maturity, and we may pass on now to note that in their own more lofty style these works of the maturity of the art are just as much the expression of the mind of the people, just as truly the outcome of the common emotional life concentrated in the festival, as were the temporary embroidered hangings, or the doll-idol to which the multitude presented a new gown at the periodical celebration.

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[1] *Descriptio Græciæ*, ii. 4, 5.

§ 34. Fundamental characteristics of Hellenic Art.

If it be asked what are the qualities most apparent in the best work of the Greeks, the answer will be—perfection in external form, combined with an indescribable inner repose and dignity. Now both these qualities depend upon the fact that the artist was in all cases working towards a very clearly realized conception of his themes. These were always of general interest, and had been constituted as substantial objects of thought long before he took them in hand. His selection of the plastic form as his vehicle of artistic expression was not accidental (see § 62) but followed naturally from his desire to give the utmost definiteness of shape to these distinctly formed conceptions. 'Inner repose and dignity' characterize his productions, because they are the work of a Greek endowed with all the intellectual and moral equipment of his race; their perfection of form follows therefrom as a necessary artistic corollary.

§ 35. The underlying idea of Greek Sculpture—Hellas in opposition to the non-Hellenic.

Our task here is first to draw out these intellectual and ethical elements which composed, as it were, a grand underlying idea in Greek sculpture and made it the expression of the national mind; and next to show how this idea was wrought out in detail. It may at the outset surprise some readers to hear of a 'grand underlying idea' in Greek sculpture. Such ideas they would recognize at once in medieval art, where the sublime themes of Judgment and Bliss and Condemnation, the drama of Redemption, the sacred history of the whole Creation, are unfolded in moving scenes before the spectator. But in Greek art, they would say—apart of course from questions of sculpturesque beauty—what is there? Single figures for the most part, either at rest or fighting, acting again and again the well-worn rôles of heroes in contest with Centaurs or Amazons, or else majestically posed or enthroned with nothing in the world to do or care about! Where, it may be asked, do we find in Greek art the manifestation of any great common idea, the movement of a living mass with one heart and one passion? It is true that the Greeks, as sculptors and lovers of clear-cut definite form, preferred to concentrate what they desired to express in one or two figures, rather than to diffuse the interest of their theme over a vast space of wall or roof, as was the manner of the medieval painter. But a theme the Greeks had, and a noble one—as noble in its way as that which filled his mind who sketched the Prophets and Sybils on the vault of the Sistine. For this theme was Hellas; Hellas as a whole and all that it meant to the Greeks and to the world; Hellas as the realm of light and order, first won, then rescued and guarded, from the powers of darkness and disorder that surrounded it on every side. To understand this is to receive quite a new view of these familiar contending heroes and placid rulers of earth and sky. The first were creating and defending a social order that alone made light and reason and beauty possible to the world, the others in their serenity represented the triumph of the Hellenic ideal when the conflict was over and victory secure. If the same scenes, the same personages, are portrayed over and over again with what may at first seem wearisome iteration, it is because the great cause they represent is for ever present to the mind of both artist and public. The primary conception of Greek as opposed to barbarian, though it did not exist in Homer's day, was recognized by Thucydides as a result of the national development, and appears in all its strength in the writings of Attic philosophers and orators, and this conception—Hellas against the non-Hellenic—formed the fundamental theme of Greek monumental art.

§ 36. 'Hellas' in the celestial, the legendary, the historical spheres.

There was, to begin with, a 'Hellas' in heaven, where the Olympian régime of light and order had been founded on the ruin of the older and darker Saturnian powers, and afterwards had to be defended and rescued from the lawless attacks of the Titans and Giants, born of the ancient brood. On earth in the legendary days, so it was believed, the heroes Heracles, Theseus, Bellerophon, issue of the gods, had slowly evolved a settled civic life from the chaos of a world the prey of monsters and robbers. To hold the conquest thus won, they and their descendants had to stand together in battle against successive assaults of the non-Hellenic powers of darkness and disorder. The Amazons were anti-social, opposed to family life, and Theseus beat them back from the Attica he had won and ruled. The Centaurs are personifications of mountain streams, the constant foes of the cultivator of the plain at the foot of hills seamed with watercourses. Like the streams in spate, down come the Centaurs from their caves and rocks on the peaceful haunts of men, striking great blows with stocks and stones, and must be met and vanquished by the Lapith sword. Then, later, the sons of the heroes join in conflict against the ever-watchful Oriental foemen of the Hellenic name in the war before Troy; again, and now in the full light of history, the contest is renewed upon Grecian soil against the embattled might of the East at Marathon and at Platæa; a memory of the bygone struggles still stirs the army of revenge that marches with Alexander of Macedon against the now broken Oriental powers. And if this was the final victory of Greek light and reason and beauty over the dark and hostile East, other foes from another point were at hand to make Hellas conscious of herself and all she had to defend. About 280 B.C. a swarm of barbarian Gauls burst into Northern Greece, overran Macedonia and Thessaly, turned the defence of Thermopylæ and menaced the seats of Hellenic civilization in the South. But again, as at Marathon, the gods descended to protect their chosen home, and divine hands, it was rumoured, hurled back the assailants from the Delphic shrine. Finally, a little later, successive Gallic hordes threaten the Greek cities in Asia Minor, and Attalus and Eumenes of Pergamon stand forth in defence of Hellenic civilization and break the power of the barbarians.

§ 37. Ideal representation in Art of the contests of Hellas against the non-Hellenic.

To the Greek, who was as familiar with his gods as with his fellow-citizens, these struggles, poetical, legendary, historical, were all the same. In his idealizing vein he would make the fight of Zeus against the Giants just as real as the battle of Eumenes against the Gauls, and Achilles and Alexander of Macedon were to him twin heroes in their work and in their glory. All were incidents in the eternal and ever-renewed contest of light and darkness, order and violence, and the incidents of the fights against the Centaurs and Amazons are used to cover references to the historical struggle of Hellas against Persia. This deep underlying idea is for ever finding expression in some one or other of these forms. The victory over Persia inspired indirectly all the monumental works of the culminating period of Greek sculpture, yet we have to look closely to find any direct historical representations of it in the arts of form. There was indeed a grand wall-picture in the Stoa Poikilé at Athens representing the battle of Marathon, painted by Micon and Panænus a generation after the event; but in sculpture, save perhaps in the frieze of the temple of Niké Apteros at Athens, the reference is always indirect, through some contest of Greeks and Trojans (as on the temple at Ægina) or of heroes against Centaurs and Amazons (as on the Parthenon, the temple of Zeus at Olympia and many a great shrine besides). The well-known figure of the Apollo Belvidere has been supposed to portray the god in the act of issuing forth from Delphi to defend in person his hallowed shrine against the Gauls. Attalus of Pergamon celebrates his victory by more or less matter-of-fact figures of contending and dying barbarians, copies of which have come down to us, but Eumenes his successor goes back to the old ideal style, and the whole grand series of monumental compositions, the glory of Hellenic art, closes with the splendid frieze from Pergamon (in the Berlin Museum), perhaps the most grandiloquent utterance of all sculpture, in which the monarch records his defeat of the Gauls under the figure of the old traditional overthrow of the invading Giants by the Olympian powers.

§ 38. Concentration of the interest of these contests in typical Protagonists.

In this way the Greeks, through these recognized *subjects* or 'stock themes' of sculpture, symbolized a contest of eternal principles, that was as vital to them as the conceptions of medieval theology to the frescoists of Italy.

True to the feeling for concentration already mentioned, and true also, as we shall see, to the genius of the sculptor's art, they personify these contending principles in a few individual protagonists. The battle is always going on between chosen individuals, a Hellene or Hellenic god or hero against Trojan or Giant or Centaur. The general interest is embodied in the single personage, who thereupon becomes not a mere unit, but a bearer of the fortunes of his people, the representative of a class, or in a single word, a *Type*.

§ 39. The Types peopling the Hellenic world.

After the clear conception of the Hellenic world as a whole and its ideal representation in the forms just described, come the clear conception and the perfect plastic delineation of the various typical personages who peopled that world. This is not the place to attempt any enumeration of these typical personages, who meet us again and again in the great friezes and sculptured groups. The significant fact is that such enumeration should seem even possible. It must be admitted that in the earlier as well as in the later phases of Hellenic art there is a freedom in the choice of subjects that was not exercised by the sculptor during the culminating period. If we take only this central period of perfect maturity, extending from the time of Pericles to that of the immediate successors of Alexander, it would be possible to draw up a fairly complete list of all the themes and all the personages with which the artist cared to busy himself. It is well understood that the Greeks possessed a strong vein of aristocratic exclusiveness, and only deigned to give their attention to certain phases of human life. Man, as man, they would not recognize, but only man in special aspects and relations which brought him within the charmed Hellenic circle. Man as public servant of the state, as warrior, as trained athlete, as votary of intellectual culture, they would recognize and portray, but no room was found in the circle for man as mechanic or as servant, for such persons were not in the true sense citizens, and could not enter into the life of Hellas.

§ 40. The Olympian Pantheon.

Over the phases of human life thus exalted to honour there presided special guardian deities and heroes. Some were grave and business-like, such as Zeus, Athene, Hestia, exercising supervision over politics and counsel and household economy and the domestic hearth. Athene and Ares were deities of noble and of boisterous war. The gymnast invoked Hermes, Apollo was ever ready to lend countenance to the dance and song. The softer emotions never rose in the heart without the prompting of Aphrodite, while Hera guarded the marriage-couch. Nature had also her gods, who would meet a man when he went out into the woods alone, or surrendered his soul to the mysterious influence of the fields and hills. Dionysus and his train incorporated the teeming fruitfulness of the world, and laid the spell of divine power upon the maddening wine;

> 'The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
> And the nymphs of the woods and waves'

filled with life all desert places of the earth. Then, less individualized, but of great social importance, were certain abstract beings who had in charge constantly recurring situations of life, the best known being Eros (love) and Niké (victory). Lastly, some of the higher animals, notably the horse and the lion, received, as it were, the rights of citizenship, and became denizens of this jealously guarded Hellenic world.

It was well said by Hegel, that the Greeks never did anything greater than the creation of the Olympian Pantheon, and, we may add, the creation of all these other varied types of which the conception was so clear and true. Of the manner in which these were first formed and then represented in art, Ottfried Müller has written well in a passage revealing his intimate sympathy with the working of the Hellenic mind. 'The Greeks,' he says, 'were somehow so fortunate that long before art had arrived at external manifestation the genius of the people had prepared the way for the artist, and formed beforehand the whole world of art. The mystical element, so essential to religion, in which we feel the divine existence as something infinite and absolutely different from humanity, although never completely banished (a thing not possible among a religious people) was however thrust into the background especially by poetry, which followed the path marked out for it, fashioning everything more and more after the analogy of human life. . . . When sculpture, on its part, had improved so far as to seize the external forms of life in their truth and fulness of significance, there was nothing more required than to express those already individualized ideas in corresponding grandiose forms. . . . If in these creations the established idea of the god as fixed in literature and popular belief, and also the exquisite sense of the Greeks for form, felt themselves completely satisfied, *normal images* resulted, to which succeeding artists adhered with lively freedom . . . and there arose images of gods and heroes, which possessed not less internal truth and stability, than if the personages themselves had sat for their portraits.'[1]

§ 41. The Characterization in Sculpture of the Types.

The formation and the clear comprehension of the type was the work of Hellenic intelligence; its characterization in the most telling outward form was left to the artist, and we may observe of his achievement that he always displayed the essential idea of the type in the whole mien and countenance of his figure and not merely in attributes or accidents. In the childish period of the beginnings of sculpture noticed above (§ 32), the different gods and heroes were characterized by their familiar attributes, or their names were written beside them on the ground of the relief. In the maturity of the art the use of these aids to characterization was controlled by sound artistic tact. They are of course of value in giving richness of detail in a composition, and no sculptor could afford entirely to abandon their use. A distinction was however made between accidental attributes—often connected with the particular personage for no intelligible reason—and essential attributes where the connection is at once apparent. For example the eagle, lordly of aspect, with its home in the upper air, at once takes its place as a fitting companion for the king of gods and men. Niké naturally attends on the victorious Athene. The goddess of love and beauty holds delicately a flower in her finger-tips. Apollo carries the bow or lyre according to the particular side of his character that is to be emphasized. Such attributes are always in place, but the Greek sculptor never placed too much reliance on them. The winsome grace of Aphrodite, the splendour and swiftness of Apollo, were displayed in the whole pose and action of the forms. The softly effeminate lineaments of Dionysus needed no crown of vine-leaves for their identification. The Zeus of Pheidias at Olympia was not known by sceptre and olive crown, but by the majesty that sat upon his brow, and revealed to the awe-struck worshipper 'the guardian deity of a united Hellas . . . the giver of life and breath and all good things, the common father and saviour and protector of men.'[1]

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[1] *Ancient Art and its Remains*, Eng. Trans. § 347.

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[1] Dion Chrysostom, *Orat.* 74, p. 412.

§ 42. Maintenance of the essential character of the Types through variations.

Such were the 'normal images' of the personages of the Hellenic world of which Ottfried Müller writes, and it must now be observed that when these types were once satisfactorily formed, subsequent artists adhered to them, as he phrases it, 'with lively freedom.' This side of the matter is as important as the one we have been considering. That there should be a certain flexibility about the character of the particular personage whose normal image was thus fixed, is as essential as it is that the character should be substantially based on reason. Had it admitted of no variation and the type been frozen in unyielding lines, a stony hardness would have seized and stiffened the beautiful body of Hellenic art, and Greek gods and goddesses have become as stereotyped and lifeless as the beast-headed divinities of Egypt. The Greeks were saved from this danger because the conceptions formed in the popular mind, on which the sculptured types were based, admitted of variation, in different localities and epochs, or under the influence of successive poets and moralists. Athene, one of the simplest as well as perhaps the noblest of all these creations of the national imagination, appeared in more than one aspect. Goddess at one time of righteous war, at another she appeared as patroness of all the household arts of her own sex, and blessed the spindle as well as the spear. Apollo in like manner could lay aside his bow and grasp the lyre. Zeus wore a benign as well as a threatening front. The varying conception of Aphrodite—one of the subtlest of all—passed through many phases celestial and earthly, and gave occasion for the finest characterization. Yet with all this variety and play of life around the characters, each remained at heart a single being. Athene never ceased to be the stainless vigilant soul, dwelling like a star apart but quick to dart her influence on every noble earthly thing. Apollo always preserves a certain scornful aristocratic purism, whether he is dealing death by his shafts, setting the Muses to dance to his lyre, or pursuing fair maids along the Peneus. The majesty of Zeus alters no more than does the charm of Aphrodite. When this goddess dons her raiment—as in the beautiful relief on the base of the Barberini candelabrum in the Vatican—a fluttering end of drapery betrays the heart within that dances lightly to the music of love. Naked, in a form of noble dignity or of softly alluring grace, she yet wears as her vesture an unearthly beauty that daunts the profane. On a face that may vary from the austere simplicity of the Venus of Milo to the sympathetic loveliness of the small head found at Olympia, there is always that melting, softly-swimming eye that Lucian praises,[1] the effect of which is due to a certain slight elevation of the inner corner of the lower eyelid—an unfailing mark of the Aphrodite type.

[1] *Imagines*, § 6.

§ 43. Flexibility of the Types in the hands of the Sculptors.

The Greek sculptors took full advantage of opportunities thus offered, and, within limits t they knew well how to recognize, they allow themselves to make variations of their own the popular types. Thus Praxiteles, in whom intellectual refinement of Hellenic art found best exponent, took up the Satyr type and p duced the most delicate modifications of single well-understood idea. His ideal of Er Love, was the subtle one of a slender youth whom incipient maturity was as yet only a c turbing dream—an ideal later on to be vulgari into the chubby Cupid of the decadence of His elder contemporary Scopas divided the sin idea of Love, and in a group of three personif the passion in a triple aspect. He let imagination brood over the sea and peopled depths with naiads and tritons in whose asp he strove to incorporate the wildness, the yea ing, the melancholy of the waves. To the nymp and bacchanals, that before his time had be merely graceful female shapes without special ch acter, he gave individual traits that correspond to their diverse haunts and diverse occupations wood and field. In the later Alexandrine a fresh figures appear upon the scene, and n artistic ideals, though a little frigid and artific beside the old, testify to the long survival of creative force of Greek artistic genius. Thou the work of the statuary had been, as we ha seen, prepared for him beforehand by the popular intelligence, yet his own artistic individuality could still have its field of exercise: the artist was still an originator though at the same time the mouthpiece of his people.

§ 44. Winckelmann on the Classical Ideal.

It was the omission to recognize to the full this element in Greek sculpture that led into a certain amount of error the justly famous Winckelmann. Winckelmann was the first of the moderns who brought to bear upon the remains of ancient art a combination of scholarly feeling and enthusiasm, and this made his *History of Ancient Art*, published about the middle of the 18th century, the commencement of the present fruitful era of archæology and art-criticism.[1] A man of distinct original genius, he writes about his theme with a certain warmth of rapture and personal self-surrender to the ideal of Beauty, which as he tells us 'seemed to beckon' to him[2] from the buried glories of Hellas. About this beauty he theorizes to the effect that in its perfection it would be like pure spring water, with no individual characteristics, just as clear water has no taste.[3] According to this, beauty would be something general and abstract, only belonging to an object without special qualities to give it individuality, and Winckelmann thinks that the Greeks aimed at securing ideal beauty in their creations by making them as *general* as possible. He suggests that they united in a single figure characteristics belonging to different individuals, and even those belonging to the two sexes. 'Those wise artists, the ancients, acted as a skilful gardener does, who ingrafts different shoots of excellent sorts upon the same stock.'[1] 'This ideal consists in the incorporation of the forms of prolonged youth in the female sex with the masculine forms of a beautiful young man.'[2] The view that ideal beauty depends on selection, combination, and the omission of individualizing details has much truth, but Winckelmann carries it too far. The conditions of beauty in the plastic art will form the theme of our study in succeeding chapters, but it may be said here, that one of these conditions undoubtedly is the absence of any too strongly emphasized individual features. These sculpturesque types which we have been considering are as we have seen on the whole of a *general* character, and so admitted of representation under the form of beauty. It would be a great mistake however to imagine that all which is required for ideal beauty is this process of generalizing. Winckelmann does not appear sufficiently to have noted the fact that if the generalizing process be carried too far, the work becomes abstract and void of interest, neither beautiful nor ideal in the best sense of the words. The comparison to pure water is misleading. Pure water is doubtless better than that which has hue and taste, but a colourless and insipid beauty is not beauty at all—it is simply uninteresting. In other words a certain amount of individual character is needed to give life and interest to a representation, and this amount the Greek artist was always careful to retain. One thing specially remarkable in his work is his tact in stopping the generalizing process at the proper point, and never allowing the representation to become abstract and unreal. He generalized, that is to say, until he secured certain well-marked types, but he did not go on to merge all these types into one. Each form was *individual* in its force and freshness and look of reality, but *general* in that, as we now know, it was not a mere portrait or character-study from nature, but the presentment of a typical personage of the Hellenic world.

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[1] English Translation by Lodge, Boston, 1880; Lond. 1881.

[2] Lodge's Translation, I. p. 302.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 311.

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 314.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 318.

§ 45. True meaning of 'Ideal' in connection with Greek Art.

If we choose to employ the word 'ideal' in relation to Greek sculpture it must be in the sense already indicated. The representations we have been dealing with were 'ideal' because they were of types worked out in the intellectual region and constituted in thought, as ideas, before they came under the cognizance of the artist. It was the underlying basis of thought, rather than this artificial process of generalizing suggested by Winckelmann, that gave an ideal stamp to the creations of Hellenic art.

§ 46. Supremacy of the Greek Sculptors.

The Greek sculptors were as supreme in their intellectual strength as in their fine sense of formal beauty. All other artists have been to them in this respect but children. Even about the efforts of the greatest men of the Italian Renaissance there is something tentative and vague, when we compare them with the majestic achievements of the Greeks. No other artists have understood so well as they, that the outward appearance of anything constituted by reason must be essentially related to its inner character, or have contrived so well that that character should be read in the most complete and lucid manner in the form. Hence their creations invite a far more close and prolonged scrutiny than any other works of art of any epoch. There is more thought, more work in them ; they unite more perfectly the interest of individual personality with the elevation and selectness of a type.

§ 47. Sculpture the expression of the Greek moral idea.

There is a long interval between these fully-evolved organic products of Greek art in its maturity, and the spontaneous outflow of popular excitement in the rustic festival, but they are only the extreme limits of a course of development which went on smoothly and unchecked. Out of the common celebration of the earliest ages, religious, tribal, domestic, grew up the institutions and ideas of later and more civilized times, and as the people advanced in intellectual stature they took stock at these social meetings of all that had been gained. Hence art in every form was as closely related to the festival in the days of Demosthenes as in those of Homer, and expressed with equal completeness the common ideals. Of all festal sites none was more in honour than Delphi, the religious centre of Greece, the shrine of art, the home of poetry and of the Muses. Within the porch of the great national temple at Delphi were written four words that exactly expressed the Hellenic idea of life. These formed the two famous mottoes γνῶθι σεαυτόν 'Know Thyself' and μηδὲν ἄγαν 'In All Things Moderation.' 'Comprehend your own nature' was the meaning of the mottoes, 'and act always by the dictates of the highest part of it, never letting self-will or passion throw you off your balance or lead you to extremes.' Such was the type of character that poets described, philosophers tried to inculcate and artists strove to express in their bronze and marble. Wherever in monumental sculpture the human form is portrayed, it has this unvarying character of dignity, thoughtfulness and self-control. The sculptor was not only the mouthpiece of the childish fancies of the people, but of its highest aspirations its most mature ideals.

CHAPTER III

MEDIEVAL FLORENCE AND HER PAINTERS

§ 48. Survival of the Festival in early Christian tim

THE social customs of the ancient world were n
abrogated by Christianity, save in so far as th
were glaringly opposed to its moral standard.
was the policy of the Church rather to incorpora
these institutions in its own system, giving
Christian turn to what in its origin was eith
distinctly Pagan or Jewish, or else was rooted
the common instincts of humanity. Of this l
kind was the festival, and we are not surprised
find that the old classical festivals lived on und
the patronage of Christian Saints, or were co
nected with the periodical events of the Christi
year. To this day, indeed, in the south of Euro
it is easy to discern a classical origin for ma
curious customs of the 'Feste' to which the peo
themselves have lost the key.

§ 49. and of its influence in stimulating Art.

Art, that had served classical religion so w
freely proffered her services to the new faith, a

the tact of the Churchmen easily detached it from its immoral associations and gave it worthy tasks to perform in Christian service. The classical artist had learned both to provide the temporary apparatus for the festivals, and to perpetuate in monuments the feelings which gave them birth. The Christian feast, of common ecclesiastical significance, or in memory of some local saint or martyr, demanded similar apparatus and commemoration, and these were supplied at first very much on the old classical lines. The Church acted on the well-known Horatian maxim, and sought to stimulate the minds of her children through their eyes as well as their ears. 'At a very early period,' says a recent writer[1]—certainly already in the fifth century—'it was usual to increase the attractions of public worship on special occasions by living pictures illustrating the gospel narrative and accompanied by songs; and thus a certain amount of action gradually introduced itself into the service.' A sacred drama, on classical models, on the Passion of Christ (Χριστὸς πάσχων) is generally included under the works of Gregory Nazianzen, and the Mysteries or miracle-plays grew to be settled institutions of the early medieval period. The Passion-play at Ober-Ammergau, though not really itself of medieval origin, is a revival of a medieval tradition that had been fruitful in artistic inspiration from early Christian times.

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[1] Prof. A. W. Ward, in *Ency. Brit.*, 9th ed. Art. 'Drama, p. 413.

§ 50. How Christian Painting began.

Permanent representations were soon demanded, and we obtain an interesting glimpse of the beginnings of the most important form of Christian painting in the writings of Paulinus of Nola, from the early years of the fifth century. Paulinus as Bishop had to take care for the education and conduct of his flock, and observed with concern that when the people came together to celebrate the festival of the patron saint of his church, they fell to feasting and dancing to wile away the long hours of vigil, or the intervals between the religious services. Hence he conceived the design of covering the walls of the church with sacred pictures of an attractive and edifying kind, in the hope that, as he expresses it, 'the forms and colours might seize upon the astonished minds of the country folk.' 'Above the designs,' he continues, 'are placed their titles, so that the written word explains what the hand has portrayed. There, while the whole multitude in turn point out the pictures one to another, or go over them by themselves, they are less quick than before to think of feasting, and feed with their eyes instead of with their lips. In this way, while in wonder at the paintings they forget their hunger, a better habit lays gradual hold on them, and as they read the sacred histories they learn from pious examples how honourable are holy deeds, and how satisfying to thirst is sobriety.'[1] The passage—a mos instructive one for the didactic element in Christian art—ends with some examples of lessons to be drawn from supposed pictures of Old Testament scenes.

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[1] Paulinus Nolanus, *Poema de S. Fel. natal.*, ix. 541 ff.

In this way the mark of the Church was set upon the work of the mural painter, who was taught from this time forward to act up to the profession, put by Vasari into the mouth of an early Florentine artist,[1] that 'by painting saints, both men and women, he would thereby render men better and more devout.' In this spirit the Church demanded not only stories from the Old and New Testament, and from the lives of saints, but also the great scenes which were to round off the shows of this world and the fashion of it, the Last Judgment, Paradise, and the Inferno. The representation of these scenes became a tradition of Christian art that was fully established by the Italian Masters at the time of the revival of painting at the close of the thirteenth century. The movement which then took place did not involve the creation of new types or new scenes, except in those cases when a fresh saint with his cycle, like St. Francis, had appeared upon the stage. In all the stock-subjects, Cimabue and Duccio and Giotto had inherited from the earlier ages of medieval art certain traditional modes of rendering, which we find in MS. illuminations, in the Romanesque wall-paintings of Germany, and in the Mt. Athos Hand-book.

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[1] Vasari, *Opere*, ed. Milanesi, Firenze, 1878 etc. I. p. 501, *Vita di Buonamico Buffalmacco*.

§ 51. The Florentines as representing medieval Culture and Art.

The secret of the brilliant development of painting in Italy from this time onwards was the general stirring of new life, originating perhaps in the Crusades, which sent the blood coursing with quick pulsation through every artery of the state. This quickening was felt very early at Florence, whose citizens in the thirteenth century are described in a 'mot' attributed to Boniface VIII as 'the fifth element,' so ubiquitous were they and versatile; it was therefore natural that the Florentines should excel the other Italians in the vividness and force with which they could realize this outward side of medieval religion, and embody it first in actual scenic representations, and then in the permanent form of the mural fresco.

§ 52. The Florentine Pageant and Mystery-play.

The value of the mysteries and pageants as an element in the inception and development of monumental painting can best be studied among this gifted people, who carried both forms of art to a higher level than they have ever elsewhere attained. Keenly intellectual, they tolerated no merely senseless shows and confused representations, and though their artistic allegories, like the literary ones of Dante, might require some considerable wit to read, yet they were careful that everything presented should have some definite meaning, and should play its appointed part in some larger unity. Jacob Burckhardt dwells on the superiority in this respect of Italian pageants over those that were so abundant north of the Alps,[1] and in Italy itself the Florentines were so generally recognized as leaders, that they were consulted by other cities or courts as professional experts or 'festaiuoli' in all kinds of mummery. Although some priest or some learned classicist might originate the scheme of a pageant, it was the artists who had to carry it out, and they used in the process a vast amount of feigned or temporary architecture and of sculpture in clay or plaster, as well as of painting and gilding on woodwork, panel and canvas. Frameworks of iron and timber, of cardboard and cloth, had to be put together and finished over with a coating of wax, attributes to be prepared for saints and allegorical personages, and masks to be painted.

§ 53. Effect of these on Art.

It was not so much the actual employment thus given that told on the artist, as the opportunity he had for the study of the subjects which came before him in his business of a frescoist. In this way it came about that 'the Italian festival in its fully developed form became in reality an intermediate stage, making easy the transition from actual life to art.'[2]

It was so because, to a people of such lively imagination, these celebrations, though make-believe, were well-nigh as real as work, traffic or war. The world of ideas was familiar to them, and in the freedom and exhilaration of the festival they sought to embody these ideas, however crudely, in material form. Later on it would be for the painter to refine and beautify these forms, to fill them more full of significance, and fix them as a permanent memorial on wall or panel; but for the moment the fancy leapt forth to concrete act before the tardy pencil of the painter could find for it the chosen and appropriate shape, and this helped him incalculably. He could rehearse, as it were, his compositions, noting the harmony or discord resulting from this or that arrangement of figures or details, the vivid effect of this or that unexpected touch of life; he could recognize what was appropriate in action or gesture, what was the value in a scene of a crowded mass and the value of an isolated single figure, and in every way consolidate and make clear his artistic perception of how to render a theme with the most life-like and forcible directness. And how ample were the means of study thus afforded! There is not one of the stock subjects of the Italian frescoist that might not be seen presented in actual show in some pageant or representation ('rappresentazione') and of more out-of-the-way themes not one for which studies would not be made by any painter who could use aright his memory or his tablets.

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[1] *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, Basel, 1860, p. 403.

[2] Burckhardt, *ibid.* p. 401.

§ 54. Rehearsal of artistic subjects in the Pageants.

To take a single illustration. What subject was more delightful to the 'quattrocentisti' artists than the Adoration of the Magi? To it they lent their full strength. Plate IV shows the picture of

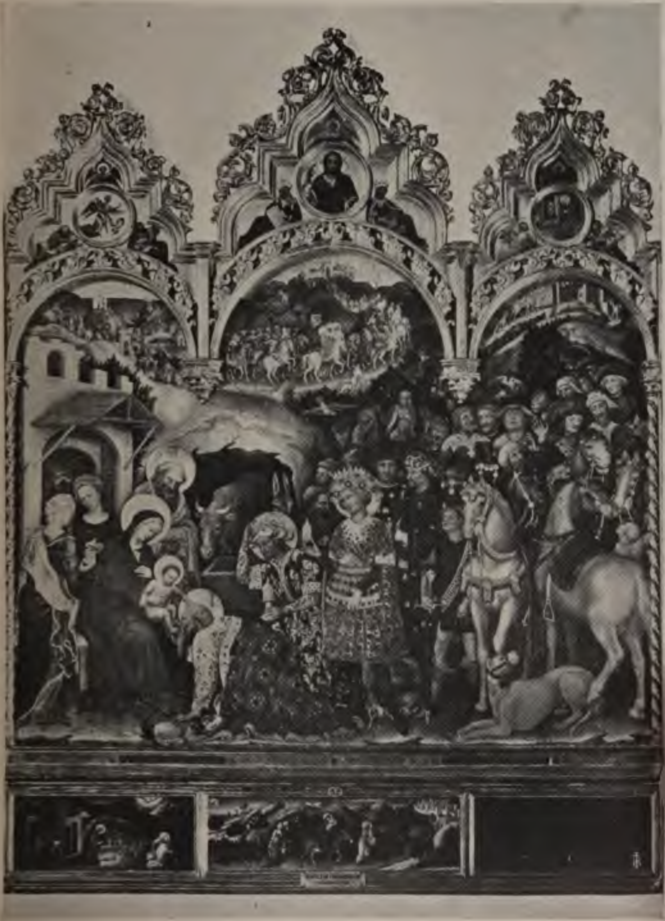

PLATE IV. To face p. 106.

Adoration of the Magi, by Gentile da Fabriano, in the Academy at Florence.

the scene by Gentile da Fabriano (in the Academy at Florence), an epoch-making work in the early years of the fifteenth century, while the same subject treated by Benozzo Gozzoli in the chapel of the Riccardi Palace is one of the most delightful pieces of decorative art of the whole period. We notice in Plate IV the realistic dresses and accoutrements, the strange oriental beasts, the varied bye-play of the swarming retainers, and these were not merely imagined by the artist but had actually been part of his experience. For this incident of the Magi, like all the rest of the sacred themes, before the fifteenth-century painters took it in hand, had been made the occasion of a rappresentazione which left the frescoists really nothing to do but to copy what they had seen before their very eyes. Here is the literal account from a trustworthy authority of what might have been witnessed in the streets of Milan in the year 1336 on the anniversary of the Feast of the Epiphany. Issuing probably from the enclosed Atrium of Sant' Ambrogio—an excellent place to arrange a pageant—there appear before the spectators the very three kings themselves, robed and crowned on their palfreys and surrounded by their attendants leading along the sumpter mules. A golden star glides in the air before them and marshals them through the streets to the ancient columns in front of San Lorenzo, where has been set up a tableau of Herod the king in the midst of his scribes and wise men. 'There they interrogated king Herod as to where Christ should be born, and having turned over many books, the scribes answered that he should be born in the city of Bethlehem hard by Jerusalem. And when they heard this, those three kings, crowned with golden crowns and holding in their hands golden cups with gold and frankincense and myrrh, preceded still by the celestial star, and followed by their sumpter mules and all their train with trumpets sounding and hornblowers going before, and men leading along apes and baboons and all kinds of outlandish beasts, in the midst of a wondrous concourse of the folk, came at length to the church of Sant' Eustorgio. Here by the side of the high altar was the Holy Stable with the ox and the ass, and within it Christ as infant in the arms of his Virgin Mother. Then those kings offered to Christ their gifts, and afterwards appeared to sleep, when an angel came to them and bade them not return by San Lorenzo but by the Roman gate, and this they straightway did.'[1]

§ 55. The artist studies from the Pageants.

It needs only a moment's reflection on a description like the foregoing to realize the immense influence on Italian painting of these mimic shows. The whole character of that phase of art, as we shall presently see, was dependent on the conditions under which it flourished. Its exuberant life, its outwardness, its general want of true religious depth and earnestness (which are exceptional when they appear), its passion for large scenes crowded with figures and glittering with 'properties,'—all in fact that gives it for us its perennial charm, is just the crystallization, so to say, of the elements that floated so freely about the Italy of the Festa and the Carnival. The connection is so patent that direct evidence is hardly needed, yet the following may be worth recording. Della Valle in his *Lettere Sanesi sopra le belle Arti*[1] in describing a picture of the Massacre of the Innocents painted in 1491 by Matteo Giovanni of Siena, explains the evident fascination of this scene for the painters and the public of the time, by the fact that, as he was informed by a book in his possession published in Siena early in the sixteenth century, representations of this and similar sacred incidents were wont 'to be performed in the churches on certain solemn occasions for the entertainment of the people,' and he adds that the scenes were evidently played in a manner more forcible than elegant, and ended sometimes with a touch of buffoonery.

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[1] Gualveneus de la Flamma, in Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Milan, 1728, tom. XII. col. 1017.

§ 56. Characteristic illustrations of the Florentine Pageants.

The importance of this side of the artistic life of the time, to which justice has not always been done, is so great as to excuse a somewhat extended treatment. A few pages may accordingly well be occupied by an account of the different kinds of pageant and representation, both religious and classical, which flourished during the golden period of Italian painting. To begin with the strictly religious devices. These may stagger us at first by their freedom, but let us remember that the Italian rappresentazioni were at any rate soon redeemed from the medieval coarseness and clumsiness which clung to them so much longer north of the Alps. We cannot imagine a pageant devised by a Brunelleschi as other than daintily rendered, however venturesome may seem his choice of theme. Reverence, it need not be said, was never the gift of the Italians, and Brunelleschi's daring device, known as the Paradise of San Felice in Piazza, represented nothing less lofty than the Annunciation in the presence of all the celestial powers. Vasari gives us a full description of this to which the reader is accordingly referred.[1] We see therein how realistically rendered was the whole scene, which included the Virgin Mary, the archangel Gabriel, the angel choir, and even the form of the Almighty himself enthroned on high; and we may ask, What is the difference between a representation such as this, and those numerous wall-paintings in tall spaces arched above, where we see up aloft the Powers of Heaven on the clouds, and in mid-air a ring of cherubs singing, as Luini has painted them in the upper part of his fresco of the Adoration of the Magi at Saronno, while below takes place the sacred event? The painting has selectness in the forms and concentration and permanence, but the pageant, we may be sure, had beauty and even a certain thrilling impressiveness. Impressive too in a different way was another 'Old Florentine' rappresentazione of which Villani gives us the notice. It was in the year of grace 1304 that word was passed round Florence that all who wished to learn some news of the other world were to assemble on the Calends of May upon the Carraja Bridge and along the Arno. There sure enough was to be seen arranged on sundry barges a most fearsome pageant of the nether regions wherein were demons innumerable, 'horrible to see,' and the naked souls of the condemned roasted with fire and flayed in truly Dantesque fashion. The show was arranged by painters[1] and was given by one of the districts of Florence. So great was the concourse of people that the old timber bridge broke down and many perished in the Arno—about whom the grim jest went round the city, that they had got what they expected, but were now seeing rather more of what goes on in the other world than they had bargained for.[2]

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[1] Romæ, 1786, III. p. 52 f.

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[1] *Opere*, ed. Milanesi, II. p. 375 ff. *Vita di Filippo Brunelleschi.*

§ 57. Dramatization of the scenes of the Passion of Christ.

The importance of scenes from the Passion of Christ in the mystery-plays is well known, and we should expect them to be worked up with Italian refinement in the Tuscan cities. We should hardly have been prepared however for the sight of a performer who represented the person of the Saviour, with body undraped save for the loin cloth, with the crown of thorns upon his head and with the flesh so painted as to look as if it had sweated blood. Yet such a figure, holding a cross on which it was made to appear that he had been suspended, was a conspicuous figure in one of the most magnificent church pageants recorded in the fifteenth century—the festival of the Corpus Christi, celebrated by Pius II at Viterbo in 1462. On this occasion the streets and places were divided out among the cardinals and other church dignitaries, who first adorned them with incredible magnificence and then arranged along them on stages various sacred tableaux and performances. There was the form of Christ recumbent beneath an altar, played by a youth who feigned to draw from his side a chalice full of the sacred blood, while a choir of winged angels chanted holy strains and clouds of incense arose into the air. A little further might have been seen a tableau of the Last Supper. Then for a change a space of the way was occupied not by a scenic show but by rich hangings, on which cunning weavers had depicted sacred stories in the liveliest colours. A bustling display followed. Here was a terrific dragon surrounded by a troop of imps of darkness, but as the chariot of the Pope approached in the procession, an armed warrior representing St. Michael decapitated the dragon, whereupon all the demons fled with a horrid barking. In the midst of the marketplace there appeared the sepulchre of our Lord, with soldiers in armour stretched out in sleep as if they were dead, and angel guards watching 'that the chamber of the celestial bridegroom be not violated.' When the Pope reached the spot 'behold suddenly as it were from heaven there flew down by the aid of a rope, a youth of most beauteous form winged like an angel, who with the mien of a seraph made inclination to the Prince and then in divine accents sang a hymn announcing the coming Resurrection of the Lord. There was a great silence, no one uttered a word: all listened entranced, as if it were the thing itself that were being done and this were in very truth a messenger from heaven.' Then suddenly arose lightnings and thunder, the sleeping soldiers started up, but recoiled in terror as there appeared issuing from the tomb the risen Saviour, crowned and holding the banner of the Cross. The culmination of the whole was the performance, in the grand Piazza, of the Assumption of the Virgin arranged in the following way. Below was the tomb, but on the top of some houses hard by was set out the court of the celestial king, 'where was seated God in majesty, with the choirs of the holy angels, and blazing stars, and all the joys of heavenly glory.' 'The divine offices were then performed in the Piazza amidst the deep devotion of the people; the Cardinal of St. Mark celebrated mass, the Pope blessed the multitude. Then, behold, a youth representing an angel announced in sweetest strains the Virgin's approaching assumption. Thereupon the tomb opened, and there appeared a most lovely maiden sustained by the hands of angels, who proceeded to loosen and let fall her girdle, and then with joyful mien and singing sweetly was taken up into heaven. There her Son came forward to meet her; he kissed her on the forehead, presented her to the Eternal Father and set her down upon his own right hand. Then chanted the celestial hosts, and touched their instruments of music, and all heaven was full of joyful smiles and gladness.'[1]

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[1] Vasari, ed. Milanesi, I. p. 510, *Vita di Buonamico Buffalmacco.*

[2] Giov. Villani, *Istorie Fiorentine*, viii. c. 70.

§ 58. The religious and secular 'Triumphs.'

A special form of the religious pageant was the so-called 'Trionfo' or procession, in which appeared masked and costumed mummers representing sacred personages or allegorical beings, as well as cars elaborately adorned with symbolical trappings and bearing along groups of persons or set pieces got up with accessories and backgrounds. From Early Christian times processions had formed a part of the services in the great churches, and had not been without their dramatic elements. The 'triumph' was the same thing on an extended scale and in the open air. Dante was not drawing wholly on his imagination when he describes the triumphal procession of Beatrice in the *Purgatorio*,[2] in which appeared the four and twenty elders, the four beasts, the three Christian and four cardinal virtues together with various saints. He had no doubt seen such performances, and if the memory of them gave distinctness to his description, it must have influenced in the same way the frescoists when they came to adorn their friezes with long lines of sacred personages. But the sacred triumph was rivalled in later times by the more secular processions imitating Roman triumphs, which came into vogue with the revival of classical studies, and which again furnished congenial artistic themes to painters like Mantegna.[1] In Florence, on the occasion of the visit of Pope Leo X, Lorenzo the Magnificent represented the triumph of Paulus Æmilius, followed by that of Camillus. These two processions were both arranged and furnished forth by the painter Francesco Granacci, under the skilled direction of Lorenzo himself and of the learned Jacopo Nardi.[2] In the life of Jacopo da Pontormo by Vasari the reader will find elaborate descriptions of the rival pageants prepared for the Florentine carnival of 1513 to celebrate the election of a Medici to the Papal Chair.[3] The most learned scholars racked their brains for suitable classical representations to fit the humanistic taste of the times, and dressed them out with all the wealth of allegorical allusion at their command. A staff of artists and craftsmen of all kinds—architects, modellers, painters, gilders, costumiers, inscription writers, theatrical makers-up, carpenters, smiths—was kept hard at work carrying out the designs, and though the whole thing may appear to us to be rather overladen, the splendour and richness of it must have passed all bounds. The chariot of the Age of Gold, to take one item only, was adorned with figures in relief by Baccio Bandinelli, and by Pontormo with paintings. In the midst of the car was a globe as of the world, with a prostrate figure of a man in rusty armour lying on it, to represent the dead age of iron. The armour was however cleft, and from the fissure there proceeded the naked figure of a child, gilded all over to convey the idea of a new age of gold reviving. The gilded child was a baker's boy hired for ten scudi, and the performance unhappily killed him.

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[1] Pius II, *Commentarii*, Romæ, 1584, L. viii. p. 384 ff.

[2] xxix. 43—xxx.

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[1] Mantegna's Triumph of Julius Cæsar at Hampton Court is just a painter's rendering of one of these actual Trionfi.

[2] Vasari, v. p. 340 f. *Vita di Francesco Granacci.*

[3] *Ibid.* vi. p. 250 ff. *Vita di Jacopo da Pontormo.*

No sooner had humanistic studies so far established themselves as to relegate to the background the old religious representations, than all the energies of the festaiuoli were devoted to the contrivance and arrangement of processions of a classical and allegorical order. They were accompanied by singers whose strains served as a program or description of the show, and a glance through Grazzini's published collection of these poems[1] will, with the help of a lively imagination, suffice to fill for us the streets of Florence with pageants gay or gloomy, graceful or rollicking, in which all the heterogeneous elements of the culture of an age of transition, jostled one another in the most admired confusion. Grazzini's collection opens with the song for the triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne ascribed to Lorenzo de' Medici himself, and the verses bid us behold the amorous pair in their chariot, begirt with Nymphs and the little Satyrs their lovers, and followed by Silenus with all the Dionysiac rout. Other poems introduce us to spectacles whimsical and tragic, satirical or charming, such as the show of 'monks loose from their convent,' of 'the poor asking for alms,' of 'the condemned souls,' of 'devils,' of 'the blest from Paradise'; of 'countrymen crying all kinds of fruit' (with covert allusions); of 'the seasons,' 'the sciences,' 'the virtues,' 'the planets'; of 'young wives and old husbands'; of 'the painters,' 'the shoemakers,' 'the muleteers'; of 'the elements,' 'the summer,' 'the snow'; while the list of the giddy revels may fitly close with the elaborate pageant of the car of Death described by Vasari,[1] that was accompanied by singers disguised as corpses who chanted out a lay by Alamanni with the doleful refrain—

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[1] *Tutti i Trionfi . . . o canti carnascialeschi*, edited by Grazzini, Cosmopoli (Lucca), 1750.

> 'Penitence and pain and grief
> Rend all hearts without relief,
> Penitence and grief we cry
> This funereal company.
> As ye are so once were we
> Like to us ye soon shall be.'

§59. Festal aspect of the artist's general surroundings at Florence.

Apart however from the formal representations, through which, as we have seen, the artist's work was more than half done for him before he had even set charcoal to paper for his cartoons, there was the general atmosphere of the festival, and therefore of art, which filled every place and acted as a constant and powerful stimulus to the creative fancy. It was not the set-piece alone, but the sudden unpremeditated explosion of the festal fire, that made the Florence of Dante and the Florence of Lorenzo so prolific in her special forms of art. Then, as a recent historian of the City exclaims, 'every spectacle was a fête, and there was nothing that was not made a spectacle—a picture to be looked at in the painter's workshop, a betrothal, a wedding, the taking of the habit by a novice, the first mass of a priest, the last rites for the dead, a popular assembly, the election of magistrates, their entry into office, the march-out or return of the army, the arrival or departure of distinguished guests—for all alike the bells rang out a festal peal and the people ran together at their clamorous summons.'[1] One would fain have seen those youths crowned with flowers, who marched on May-day through the streets in the train of one fairest of them all who enacted the god of love;[2] or that sumptuous wedding in the Adimari family on June 22, 1420, when the Piazza San Giovanni was canopied all over with red and white cloth, and beneath it the cavaliers and ladies bidden to the feast, all in gold and pearls and ermine, were dancing hand in hand, as we may see them dance to-day in Lorenzetti's fresco of the City at Peace in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena.[3] All such private fêtes were however cast into the shade by the great popular festival of San Giovanni held yearly on June 24 when the Arti, or Trade-guilds, the nobles, the political factions, the different quarters of the city, used to combine to form companies of revellers or to display pageants. We are fortunate in possessing from the pen of the historian Goro Dati, who was born in 1363, an elaborate account of the celebrations of San Giovanni as witnessed in his time. A translation of part of this may be fitly included in the present chapter. It is a document which, in spite of its diffuseness, the reader will not be sorry to possess, as the very garrulity of the enthusiastic annalist bears testimony to the impression made by the rich and brilliant display.[1]

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[1] *Opere*, IV. p. 134, *Vita di Piero di Cosimo.*

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[1] Perrens, *Histoire de Florence*, Paris, 1877, III. p. 394.

[2] In 1283, Villani, vii. 89.

[3] *L'Osservatore Fiorentino*, Firenze, 1777, II. pt. I

§ 60. A fourteenth-century description of the Florentine Festival of San Giovanni.

'When comes the time of spring, which makes all the world grow glad, every Florentine begins to think how best he may celebrate the feast of San Giovanni which is due in the middle of the summer, and each one makes provision in due time of robes and ornaments and jewels. Has any one wedding feasts or other celebrations in view, he puts them off till this time even from two months before, and all the interval is devoted to getting ready the Palio[2] and the vestments of the attendants, and the banners and the trumpets, and the wax-candles and all the other offerings, as well as the lengths of stuff that the districts under the protection of the Commune offer as tribute. Then too there are coming in supplies of viands for the banquets, and the horses arrive from every part to run for the Palio, and all the city is busy with the preparations, while the minds of the youths and maidens are all alert and ready for the festival. Nor does the approach of this feast prevent men from observing any that fall in the preceding weeks, such as San Zanobi, and the Ascension, and the Spirito Santo, and the Holy Trinity, and Corpus Christi day, for on all these festivals they yield their hearts up none the less to joyfulness, and dance and sing and make music over their banquets and jousts and every other graceful sport, so that one would think that there was nothing else to be done during all the time before San Giovanni's day.

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[1] Goro Dati, *Istoria di Firenze*, Firenze, 1735, p. 84 ff.

[2] The 'Palio' was a splendid mantle or piece of stuff offered as the prize for the horse-race on San Giovanni's festival. See *infra*.

'But when at last there comes the vigil of the feast, then in the morning very early all the Trades (Arti) make a show outside their shops with all the rich and lovely things, the ornaments and the jewels they had prepared. Such cloth of gold and silk is there on view as would furnish forth ten realms, such jewels of gold and of silver, such canopies, such painted canvases, such wondrous inlaid panels and all sorts of arms and armour that could never be counted up.

'Now about the third hour throughout the city there winds a solemn procession of all the clerics, priests, monks, and brothers of all the different orders, with such infinite treasure of relics of the saints that it is a most solemn and religious show, let alone the marvellous richness of their robes and sacred vestments, with the cloth of gold and silk and embroidered designs which the whole world could not match. With them come many bands of secular persons attached to the companies of religious orders and dressed as angels or imitating in the most vivid manner some of the Saints of the orders, or even the very relics they honour, and these all stream on with songs and shouts and the sound of all manner of instruments. From Sta. Maria del Fiore the procession starts, goes round the city and thither again returns.

'Later on after midday when the heat is a little abated, about the hour of Vespers, all the citizens are arrayed each under his own banner in sixteen bands, each band in its place, one following the other, with the citizens under each banner walking two and two, the older and more honourable in front and the rest following, till at last come the boys all in richest dress, and they go to offer one by one a candle of a pound's weight each in the church of San Giovanni. The bands are some of them, or indeed for the most part, preceded by performers who play or engage in pleasant diversion or mimic representations. All along the streets where they pass, the walls and stone seats are adorned with canopies and rugs, and the crowd fills every place and there are everywhere fair maidens and youths robed in silk and adorned with jewels and precious stones and pearls, and this ceremony lasts till the going down of the sun; then when all the candles are offered, the citizens with their dames return to their houses to prepare for the day following.

'On the morning of San Giovanni he who shall go to see the Piazza de' Signori will behold a thing most wondrous and magnificent and festal so that the mind can hardly take it in. Within the grand piazza are a hundred towers that seem of gold and are called "candles" (some borne on cars and some by carriers) made of wood or cardboard and wax, and decked with gold and colours and with figures in relief representing on this side cavaliers all armed or footmen with lances and bucklers, and on another side maidens dancing in a ring, while above these figures there are modelled animals and birds and all kinds of trees and fruit and everything that may delight the vision and the heart. The towers are hollowed within, and men inside continually turn them so that the devices are seen on every hand.'

A description of the processions and offerings, official and private, at the shrine of San Giovanni now follows, and the historian concludes with the account of the great event of the Festa, the race for the 'Palio' or mantle. 'Afterwards, when midday is past and the folk have dined and taken some repose as each one pleases, the ladies and the cavaliers all flock together to the spot where the coursers running for the Palio will have to pass. And these go through the midst of the city along a straight street wherein are many habitations and fair houses and rich, and of citizens of repute, more than in any other part. From one end to the other of the city then, along this straight street fragrant everywhere with flowers, you would see all the ladies and all the jewels and all the rich adornments of the city, and great is the festal cheer while many nobles and knights and foreign lords come every year from all the countries round to see the beauty and magnificence of the feast, till in that place there is such a concourse of folk that it seems incredible, what with foreigners and what with citizens, so that any one who did not see it would never be able to believe or even imagine it. Then at the sound of three strokes on the great bell of the Palazzo de' Signori, the coursers all ready for the race are set to run, while up aloft on the tower one can see by the insignia of the riders that are there hung up, which horse belongs to each, for the horses are brought from all parts of Italy, the most admired Barbary coursers in the world—and he who is first to reach the Palio, his prize it remains. Now the Palio itself is borne aloft on a triumphal car with four wheels adorned with four sculptured lions that seem alive, one for each corner of the car, and the car is drawn by two horses whose trappings are emblazoned with the arms of the Commune, and are ridden by two youths who guide them. But the Palio itself is very great and rich, woven of crimson velvet, and is in two parts with a band of gold a palm broad, lined with minever and bordered with ermine, and fringed with silk and fine gold, so that it costs in all 300 florins or more, but since for some time back it has been woven from top to bottom of finest gold there are spent on it 600 florins or more. And I must not omit to say that all the great Piazza of San Giovanni and part of the street is covered with canopies of azure embroidered with golden lilies.'

§61. The artistic outcome of the brilliant festal life of medieval Italy.

Such was then the picturesque and brilliant festal life that was so marked a feature both of ancient Greece and medieval Italy. While under Hellenic skies the human form, graceful, vigorous, set off not concealed by dress, offered on every side models of manly and feminine beauty, along the streets of the Italian city a brilliant throng of gaily-robed personages flashed in swift movement before the eye, while the scented air was full of song and trumpet peal and of the clang of bells.

§62. The difference between the artistic expression of the Greeks and Italians.

The Florentine painter felt the spell of these surroundings, but he conceived and represented his world in a spirit different from that of the Greek. The latter, as we have seen, concentrated upon the single pregnant type all the interest of his work, but the Italian fed his imagination with gala sights and sounds, till before it there opened out large scenes crowded with figures and full of the most varied incidents and accessories. The difference between the single figures of Hellenic art and the extensive scenes of the medieval painters, corresponds to the difference between the characteristics of the plastic and the graphic arts. But the selection of these arts as appropriate media of artistic expression rests upon distinctions in national character and in religion. The Greeks were sculptors because they possessed great intellectual depth and a strong predilection for definiteness of form. The Florentines were in the main painters[1] because their intelligence was keen rather than profound, their interest almost morbidly restless in all features of the life about them. The characteristics of Greek and medieval religion were also factors of moment. In each there was a lofty conception of the Divine Personality, and, besides this, a recognition of various subsidiary beings—in Greece, gods, heroes, nymphs, etc.; in the medieval world, saints and angels. Where Greek religion broke down was in the fact that it provided so little for the gods to do. They could engage with dignity in the great contest of Hellas against the non-Hellenic, but this, as we have seen, did not admit of much variety in presentation. So far as their private performances and adventures went, these were as a rule of the most silly or disreputable kind, and excited the indignation of the more earnest thinkers of the people.[1] Archaic art represented these freely, but when sculpture came to its maturity, they were discarded as derogatory to the dignity of the divine nature, which monumental statuary strove ever to exalt. Thus on the ancient works of decorative art known as the Chest of Cypselus and the Throne of Apollo at Amyclæ described by Pausanias,[2] there were depicted all sorts of picturesque incidents of mythology which never occur in the monumental sculpture of the great period. There the divine beings are represented either in the one great contest or else in the perfect calm that comes when all strife is lulled. Such was the ideal of the divine nature conveyed by a characteristic passage in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*,[3] as that of a Being enshrined in absolute perfection, needing nothing, doing nothing, and active only in a certain 'energy of contemplation.' According to the Christian scheme, on the other hand, the Divine Personality only truly revealed itself in movement and action, and these touched human life at every point. A divine *narrative*, not the Divine Personality in repose, was the theme of the Christian artist, and all the actions of the subsidiary beings were in accord with the one typical narrative, and so became worthy subjects for the highest artistic treatment. All that Saints and Angels did was in harmony with the recognized ideals of conduct, and in Christian mythology the picturesque was always moral, while it was seldom so in Greek.

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[1] There was of course Greek painting just as there was Florentine sculpture. The latter has been preserved to us but does not represent so great an artistic effort as the contemporary painting. Greek pictures, on the other hand, have almost entirely perished. We know that the ancients themselves valued them even more than their statuary, but the latter was a far more efficient vehicle of artistic expression.

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[1] The philosopher Xenophanes remarked that the poets made the gods indulge in all the actions which men regarded as most disgraceful, in theft, adultery and fraud.—Ritter and Preller, *Hist. Phil. Gr. et Rom.* § 132.

[2] *Descript. Græciæ*, v. 17, 5 and iii. 18, 9.

[3] x. 8, 7.

§63. The large Scenic Picture; how it was conceived and wrought.

Hence both the characteristics of medieval religion, and the general view of human life current in the Italian cities, made for the adoption of the large scenic picture, rather than the single sculptured form, as the most suitable vehicle of artistic expression. These scenes were each conceived of as a whole, not after Hellenic fashion as a collection of more or less isolated groups, but they were treated only in their broad external aspects without much concentration of feeling or searching into nature's more recondite beauties, and were fixed as it were in a single plane. Of depth and distance or effects of light and shade the Florentine was careless, and would not break for these his serene and even delineation. The technical traditions of his art came in this matter to his aid. The fresco painting he practised was a well-established form of wall decoration inherited by him from his classical forerunners, and as such it invited to a flat treatment of the picture, and to rapid unlaboured handling. It was moreover a handicraft pursued upon a workshop system, and this implied an assured technique advancing from the inception to the completion of a work by well-understood stages; division of labour through which these different stages could be portioned out among assistants of varying gifts or education, and uniform success within the recognized limits of the practice of the times. Such a system did not specially stimulate individual genius, but *it established a school* and secured thereby an extraordinarily high level of work throughout the artistic community.

Let us first of all transport ourselves in thought back to the Florence of the early Renaissance, and by watching the painter at his work, strive to understand the spirit—so unlike that of the modern artist—in which this work was conceived and executed.[1]

§ 64. The Frescoists of the fifteenth century; their character, surroundings and work.

The social position and daily habits of these artist-craftsmen are illustrated by numberless anecdotes and incidental notices in the books of the time, too numerous to quote. We can look in at them through the open doors of their work-shops, and can note how simple was their dress[1] and fare,[2] how careless they were of externals, how absorbed in the pursuit of their inspiring craft. We can visit them as they labour at home among their apprentices, or follow them to the chapels which they clothe with frescoes. We know them as men of shrewdness and humour[3] delighting in good cheer and festive talk after the day's work is done.[4] Unassuming in manner but able to preserve their frankness and their wit in the presence of the great,[5] they are conscious of their own worth but fully satisfied with the external conditions under which they had been brought up—conditions which, however unlike those surrounding the artist of the sixteenth century or of more modern days, were extremely healthful to the particular form of art they practised.

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[1] The following account is drawn from various sources of information which are indicated in the footnotes. The practice it describes is that of the frescoist of the fifteenth century who belonged, like Ghirlandajo, to the old school, yet recognized the advances which had been made in the ancient technique of mural painting. The operations of the painter in fresco and in tempera are described fully in the treatise on Painting by Cennino Cennini, who was a follower of the school established by Giotto in the early fourteenth century. His work, written about a century after Giotto's death, has been translated and annotated as the first volume of the invaluable *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttechnik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, Wien, 1871, etc. Subsequent notices of a technical kind in Vasari and elsewhere enable us to see how an artist of the fifteenth century would extend the somewhat primitive practice described by the Giottesque, while still keeping on the old lines.

§ 65. Interior of a Florentine workshop.

We are in the quarter of the painters[6] in the Florence of the fifteenth century, and stop before a door over which swings the sign of the guild of the Speziali[7] figuring the Madonna and Child upon a ground of white. Within is a workshop long and large communicating by a door at the further end with the master's own house,[1] and already, though it is early morning, the scene is a busy one. On tables against the wall or on easels are arranged sundry panels and carved crucifixes in progress, and a dozen apprentices or assistants are engaged on various stages of the work. Some make a beginning by smoothing and clamping together panels of poplar wood and covering them with linen cloth, over which is spread the smooth white gesso painting-ground; others model in relief in gesso, with incrustations in costly stones, the crowns and ornaments of the saints already sketched in with charcoal by the master's hand.[2] A finished crucifix yonder is having its ground gilded, the surface having been previously stamped with a small diaper pattern while the gesso was still wet; and hard by an assistant skilled in carving is at work on an elaborate Gothic frame for a tempera panel which has just been carefully laid in by one of the older apprentices. Beside the door some boys, beginning their artistic career, are rubbing down on a stone with pure water the fresco pigments—brown, red and yellow earths, with lime for the white,[3]—the precious ultramarine blue, for the use of which there is always a special

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[1] Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Vita di Cosimo de' Medici* (about Donatello).

[2] Vasari, ed. Milanesi, II. p. 398, *Vita di Donato.*

[3] Such was especially the character of Giotto, of whom many anecdotes were current. See his life by Vasari. Boccaccio, Giorn. vi. Nov. 5. Sacchetti, Nov. 75, etc.

[4] Sacchetti, Nov. 136.

[5] Vasari, I. p. 390, *Vita di Giotto.*

[6] As early as 1269 a legal document mentions a certain residence at Florence as situated 'inter dipintores.'—Vasari, I. p. 265.

[7] Gaye, *Carteggio,* II. 39, quotes documents of the fourteenth century, showing the inclusion of painters in the guild of the

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'Speziali' or Apothecaries, probably on account of their use of pigments classed as 'drugs.'

[1] Sacchetti, Nov. 84.

[2] Cennino Cennini, *Buch von der Kunst*, Wien, 1871, c. 113 ff.

[3] Metallic whites, such as those made from lead or zinc, do not serve for fresco. Cennino gives a receipt for the preparation of lime-white, 'bianco-Sangiovanni,' in his 58th chapter.

contract, being kept under lock and key. Further on, more experienced hands are mixing the finely-ground tints to the consistency of cream, and setting them aside in little jars ready for the master-frescoist's use. The master will paint to-day at the Franciscan convent, in the votive chapel of the great family whose ancestral palace, barred and towered, overhangs his house and workshop, and is to have with him as aids four of the most advanced apprentices. These meanwhile as they wait the maestro's appearance are discussing that absorbing topic of interest for Florentines, the forthcoming Carnival, at which the different corporations of the city are to contribute fresh and splendid pageants. A hundred names are in the air—names of ancient Romans and of Christian Saints, names of Virtues and Graces and Personifications from mythology, or from sacred legend. Processions and groups of these are sketched out; pageants lately seen by travelled assistants in other cities are described; for each figure the appropriate costume and head-dress and attributes are argued over, the older youths showing considerable acquaintance both with Scripture and with legend, gained for the most part in conversation with intelligent clerics during the progress of mural decoration in the churches.

All conversation is now checked as the master enters from his house, clad as for work in hose and belted doublet.

He holds a roll of cartoons in his hand and signs to an apprentice to come forward with a plasterer's journeyman who has been awaiting his pleasure. The roll when displayed shows a coloured study for the mural composition on which he is engaged, and pointing out to his assistant and to the plasterer that portion of the work he has laid out for execution on that particular day, he sends them forward to the chapel to spread over the corresponding part of the wall the fresh coat of smooth plaster, or intonaco, on which the painting will be carried out. With them proceed other chosen assistants carrying the jars of paint, the brushes and sponges, and a heavy roll of cartoons, over which the master is accustomed to spend no inconsiderable portion of the night. Before he can himself follow them he must go the round of the shop and give each apprentice or journeyman his task for the day. If he be of the temper of Domenico Bigordi called Ghirlandajo, who insisted on his apprentices accepting every commission that came to the shop, were it but the painting of hoops for ladies' baskets,[1] these tasks might be varied enough. There are, let us suppose, certain shields to be emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the Adimari. The nuns of Sta. Barbara, outside the Porta San Friano, have vowed a procession to a neighbouring shrine, and need a banner painted with the figure of the saint beside her tower, to be borne before the abbess at its head. The wedding chest, for the nuptials of Ursula the fair daughter of Ser Arnolfini the notary of San Felice, has been brought in from the shop of Dello di Niccolo the sculptor, who has carved the Cupids holding the medallions on the sides, and these have now to be respectively gilded and painted with the story of the lady's patron saint. Old Bertoluccio the flesher from the Mercato Vecchio hard by, needs a new sign-board over his booth, and has left the old one for a pattern late last night in the hands of a new apprentice, whose lofty ideas of his art were somewhat scandalized by so paltry a commission. These new tasks are at once portioned out among the journeymen according to their several capacities and grades of training. A word of direction suffices for one, while another receives a rough sketch in charcoal for his guidance. Work in progress is then reviewed and criticized, and at last, donning his cloak and drawing the hood of it over his head, after signing to his favourite pupil to attend him, the master leaves the shop and wends his way to the neighbouring convent church.

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[1] Vasari, III. p. 269, *Vita di Ghirlandajo.*

§ 66. How the Votive Chapel was painted.

Let us glance in there at the votive chapel a little later in the morning and see him at his task. At the side against the northern wall has been erected a scaffold, and on it are busy two of the apprentices. Against the space of freshly-laid intonaco provided for the day's work, they have nailed up a cartoon, on which are drawn out at full size the figures, architecture and accessories destined to fill it. They pass over the outlines with a blunt-pointed stylus of iron, dinting the paper so as to impress on the yielding plaster a line sufficient to guide the painter in his work.[1] A small coloured sketch of the whole composition has been given out of the roll to a third, who is specially skilled in appreciation of colour, and he is mixing the tints required for the day, taking a dark, light and middle tint for each differently coloured robe,[2] for the fair flesh of the ladies and children or the tanned skin of the pagan executioner, for the architecture and background. These tints he will place in little pots ready to the master's hand when he begins to paint.

§ 67. A Cycle of Fresco-paintings.

Meanwhile the master himself has not yet set his hand to the work, but is seated on one of the carved benches lining the walls, in deep conversation with the Prior of the Convent over the sketches for the whole work, which lie unrolled before them on the floor. The pictures are designed to celebrate the entry into the Franciscan Order of a younger scion of the noble family, a youth of equal learning and ambition and full of zeal for the Order. The subjects are drawn from a Franciscan legend and deal with the adventures of a friar and his companions at the court of the Paynim Saracens. They are displayed on the three walls of the chapel excluding the east, and each one of the three is subdivided into symmetrical groups forming in each case a centre and two wings. On the first wall, on the one wing of the picture, a youth is shown deliberating whether he shall take the vows, while in the centre is seen his solemn reception into the Order, and on the other wing he appears departing with companions for a missionary journey into Asia. On the second or western wall there is again a composition of a threefold order. On the one side the faithful band is engaged in preaching to the turbaned Saracens, but soldiers interrupt the conventicle and seem prepared to seize upon the unlicensed missionaries. In the centre is represented the scourging of the friars in presence of the Soldan himself before whom they have been haled. The monarch sits enthroned aloft in the midst of his attendants whose robes and accoutrements are of the most fanciful kind, while the friars are seen stripped and tied to a tree amidst a crowd of eager onlookers. Then in the further part of the composition the sufferers are in the hands of executioners who have suspended them on trees, but the leader of the missionaries, the hero of the first picture, discourses aloud to the people from the gibbet to which he is bound, and his words evidently produce a profound sensation on some women in the crowd.

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[1] Vasari, *Introduzione, della Pittura*, c. ii. *Opere*, ed. Milanesi, I. p. 175. The use of the full-sized cartoon was a later improvement, not known to Cennino, who directs the painter to sqaure out his design on the wall from a small sketch. In other points of fresco practice his precepts differ from the description given here, which probably represents pretty accurately the custom of the fifteenth century.

[2] Cennino, c. 71.

The third wall is devoted to a grand scene of the attempted decapitation of the holy men by the sword. Some heads have fallen and the bodies lie lifeless on the ground, while others,

among them the youthful leader, are kneeling
await the blow. Suddenly there arises a frightf
storm that bursts upon the multitude, destroyi
the executioners, frightening the obdurate a
accomplishing the summary conversion of t
waverers. The surviving friars with their chi
are saved and set to work to baptize their co
verts. In rendering the storm the painter h
taxed all the resources of his art, and has fill
the scene with incidents well conceived if n
perfectly rendered. Touches of life are the
showing keen observation and a desire for t
most telling representation of nature possibl
As the black storm-cloud overshadows the scen
the men and women in the crowd turn up the
robes over their heads for shelter; the soldie
hold up their bucklers and the hail is seen actual
rebounding from the surface of them. The wi
catches the flowing robes of the orientals; t
trees bend before the blast; all is confusion a
terror. In the centre of the foreground a mount
executioner has fallen under his horse and runs
through with his sword in the act. At t
extreme right hand of the picture and fit
closing the series, is the scene where the survivi
friars under their leader are baptizing the fo
converted through the sudden and miraculo
hurricane.[1]

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[1] These scenes are partly taken from a series by Ambro
Lorenzetti of Siena, described by Ghiberti in his second Co
ntary. See Vasari, ed. Le Monnier, Firenze, 1846, I. p. xx
gments of the frescoes still exist and are referred to by Cro
Cavalcaselle in their notice of the Lorenzetti, in the *History*
inting in Italy, Lond. 1864, II. p. 134.

§ 68. Consultation over Cartoons.

Such are the main features of the design, but only a portion is as yet drawn out to full size. The third wall has been first attacked and some of the figures in the scene of decapitation are already painted in their place. Full-sized cartoons for most of the rest have been squared out from the small studies, and it is the cartoon for one of the prostrate figures and for an executioner that the apprentices are at this very moment tracing through upon the wet plaster ready for the master-painter's hand. The other scenes are only in the form of small studies, and it is these that the master is now discussing with the Prior. The latter, a genial and cultured soul, imbued with the spirit of the early Renaissance, is a keen lover of art and has some shrewd hints to offer. He finds fault with the bareness of the first composition which contains no female figure, and suggests that the saintly patroness of the youthful votary—let us suppose her Sta. Caterina—should be shown beside him at the first as directing his choice, and then again as leading him forth with his companions on his missionary expedition. For a model one need not look further than to the fair and pious sister of the new-made friar, one of the choice flowers of Florentine beauty, who has promised with her friends that very morning to visit the chapel. Then the scourging scene wants more life and action—the Prior knows something of the details of such a performance. Let there be two executioners waiting at rest while two others ply the lash, and let the violence of their exertions be shown by sweating foreheads and matted hair. There is a gardener of the Convent that shall serve as a model, while for the faces of the friars throughout, the painter shall have his pick of the brethren, that all may be as like life as possible.

§ 69. A visit from the Élite of the city.

Further conversation is interrupted by the entry of the expected visitors, a gaily dressed company, escorted by the sacristan. Here is the winsome sister of the devotee, daughter of the noble family that owns the chapel, and displays its arms carved and emblazoned on the woodwork of its fittings. She is not alone, however, and comes with friends eager for some business in hand which they have been discussing as they walked along. Among them is the famous scholar, highly esteemed in humanistic circles, whose lectures on Greek literature are attended by the élite of the aristocratic circles of the city. He has travelled in the Levant, and as all the party turn with eager interest to look at the sketches thus displayed, he is full of information as to curious details of oriental dress and manners which will help the frescoist to enliven his scenes in Moslem land. The Soldan, for example, must not be seated western fashion on his throne, but squat there cross-legged.

The master, fully as much at his ease in the company of the noble and learned as in his own workshop, lends courteous attention to all that is suggested, and then turning to the lady, asks the favour of a sitting from her with a certain dignified grace, as conscious that he conferred as well as received an honour. She, delighted to descend to posterity as Sta. Caterina, at once consents, but with the condition that he will lend his aid in the important matter of a grand family pageant at the Carnival of which she and her friends are full. How shall she dress for the Saint? Shall she wear her head-dress of pearls? Yes, surely, for the Saint was of royal birth. If she will attend an instant he will indicate on the sketch how her figure will come in. Then on his tablets he makes quick note of her figure and carriage. There she stands a little apart on the pavement before the altar, like Firenzuola's pattern of female loveliness, and we will picture her according to his description—tall and slender of form, but with bust largely moulded and limbs firm and round; the head, set on a white throat that inclines to length, is crowned above with soft yellow hair that is both long and abundant; the eyebrows are darker than the hair, the eyes large and shaded by dusky lashes; above the rounded chin the mouth, small but with full lower lip, wears a smile that 'seems as a sweet message from the calm and tranquil heart within,' while the serenity of the ample forehead completes a picture of maiden dignity and tenderness.[1]

§ 70. The technical processes of Fresco.

But now the assistants who have been busy on the north wall of the chapel come down from the scaffold and stand waiting, evidently at the end of their work. It is known well that the master never paints in public, and the gay company, led by the Prior with whom they are on friendliest footing, now take their leave, regretting that they may not see the figures grow to life upon the wall under the sure and practised hand that is so eager to grasp the pencil. We, who are privileged to remain, can now note that the apprentices have not only transferred the cartoon to the wall, but have also laid in with flat middle tints according to his coloured sketch the backgrounds of the figures and also the draperies. Still visible however are the indented outlines indicating the direction of the folds, the contours and inner markings of the flesh parts and the detail of accessories. As he prepares to take up the brushes he indicates to the others the work they can do on the cartoons, squaring up to full size from his own studies, and drawing in the alterations he has indicated, ready for him to retouch at home in the evening. One he keeps by him to hand him the pots of colour as needed to replenish his palette, or with a brush to dash water against the surface of the wall where the plaster may be disposed to dry too rapidly, for it is essential to the fresco-process that colour and ground should dry together.

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[1] Della Bellezza delle Donne, in Firenzuola's *Opere*, Milano, 1802.

The fresco-process varied to some extent at different periods of Italian painting, but its essential principles remained unchanged, and were indeed the same as those which guided the painter of the mural frescoes found at Pompeii or Rome.

The process stands quite by itself. In all other processes—tempera, wax, oil, waterglass—some binding material is mixed with the pigment which fixes it mechanically to the ground. Fresco, on the other hand, depends upon a chemical process by which the same result is secured without any such binding material, the pigments being simply ground down and mingled with pure water. These are laid on to the wet plaster, and modern investigation shows that they are fixed there by the formation, in them and in the ground to which they adhere, of the chemical compound, carbonate of lime. The colours do not, as is sometimes supposed, *sink into* the plaster. They remain always on the surface but are held firm in the composition just mentioned, which acts as a transparent skin over the stucco. The whole work then, ground and colouring together, dries as one mass and no further painting 'a fresco' is possible upon it. When it is necessary to retouch after the wall is dry, in order to clear up details or enforce shadows, the pigment must be applied 'a tempera,' that is with a certain admixture of binding material such as glue or white of egg. These after-touches lack the permanence of the true fresco (buonfresco) as they can be washed off the wall, and having been laid on a dry surface by a kind of hatching process they are harsh and 'liney.' It is often possible to distinguish in good large scale photographs the difference between the broad soft touches of the frescoist laid on while the ground was wet, and the hard dry hatchings of the next day's retouching. Hence it was a great object to get as much done as possible in the one day upon the wet plaster, and the only real difference between the fresco practice of the mature age of Italian art described to us by Vasari, and that of the imperfect masters of the fourteenth century, was that the latter were not able to do so much upon the wet plaster and had to rely more on retouching 'a secco.' The statement in Professor Church's recent *Chemistry of Paints and Painting* to the effect that 'true fresco did not come into use until the close of the fourteenth century,'[1] is misleading. The fresco process was well understood in classical times; Vitruvius fully describes it,[2] while investigations of the ancient mural paintings at Pompeii have shown that these are executed on the wet plaster in the buonfresco style.[3] It was carried on at Byzantium through the middle ages, and there is no reason to imagine that the secret of it would be lost in medieval Italy. Cennino devotes the 67th chapter of his *Trattato* to a description of the process, and expressly tells the readers that the technical method he recommends is that traditional in the school of Giotto. Moreover he is fully alive to the importance of doing as much as possible while the ground is wet, 'for to paint on the fresh, that is a fixed portion on each day, is the best and most permanent way of laying on the colour, and the pleasantest method of painting.'[1] Doubtless the Giottesques had not the skill to do all they would have liked on the first day, but they perfectly understood what this buonfresco implied. Vasari in some interesting remarks laudatory of wall-painting in his 'Introduction,'[2] insists again and again on the importance of avoiding retouching when the work is dry—'therefore let those who seek to work upon the wall, paint with a manly touch upon the fresh plaster, and avoid returning to it when it is dry (non ritocchino a secco).' It is doubtful however if this ideal was ever quite attained to and retouching entirely dispensed with. In any case the work needed a sure and rapid hand, for the spaces to be covered were generally large, and it would not have paid the artist to linger too long over any one portion. The actual handling of the pigments would naturally vary somewhat according to the individuality of the painter, but a regular routine was indispensable for securing rapidity and uniformity of practice. Cennino prescribes careful and distinct outlining of every form, which would ensure clearness of effect. Each colour was to be mixed in three shades, dark, middle and light, and the use of these prepared tints would result in breadth and simplicity admirably in keeping with the decorative style.

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[1] London, 1890, p. 243.

[2] *De Architectura*, vii. 3.

[3] Otto Donner, in Helbig, *Wandgemälde der . . . Städte Campaniens*, Leipzig, 1868.

§ 71. The Master at work.

We may accordingly imagine our painter setting to work somewhat as follows.

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[1] *Trattato*, c. 67.

[2] *Opere*, I. p. 182, *della Pittura*, c. v.

First, with a long brush of squirrel's hair dipped in red ochre, he carefully outlines the features of the figure before him, drawing on his imagination for the expression, or referring to a sketch book of studies from nature he has open at his side. Where a bit of foreshortening adds a special element of difficulty he sets one of the apprentices up on the scaffolding to serve as a temporary model. So full a body of tradition has come down to him from the past in the form of conventions in the treatment of the nude or of drapery, so regularly do the stages in the technical execution follow each other, that the work proceeds rapidly, smoothly, and without effort. The shadows under the brows, below the nostrils, and round the chin are laid in broadly with terra verde, and the darkest of the three flesh tints is then brought down to and fused with it by dexterous blending of the wet pigments upon a surface which preserves their dampness. These half-tones are then modelled on the other side into the main tints of the flesh. White may then be used in decided touches for the high lights, and the details of the eyes, mouth, and other features are put in without too much searching after accidents of local colour. For the hair the three tints suffice, the high lights again following with white. The robes are broadly treated; after the whole has been laid in previously in middle tint the folds are marked out in their deepest shadows, then painted up with the two lighter tints, and lastly if needful touched with white. The work needs to be deftly touched, for too much handling of one spot may destroy the freshness of the tints and even rub up the plaster ground. It is not necessary (as moderns have sometimes supposed) to put touch beside touch, never going over the same ground again. So long as the pigments and the surface are wet, the tints may be laid one over the other or fused at will, and may be 'loaded' in some parts and in others thinly spread, the one essential being that a fresh and crisp effect shall not be lost.

§ 72. A critical glance at his achievement.

So the day wears on towards eventide, and the appointed space of wall, spread in the morning with the fresh plaster for the day's work, becomes gradually covered with an artistic representation simple and unpretending, but highly effective in its air of perfect ease and naturalness, its suitability to its place and its surroundings. What would please most the eye of the modern artist would be the breadth of the decorative effect, the harmonious and never too intense colouring, the clearness of the composition and arrangement of well-balanced groups. The qualities most delighted in at the time, those which we may be sure would chiefly fill with emulation the minds of the youthful apprentices, would be the animation of the scenes, with their picturesque life-like incidents, the portrait-like character in the heads, the feats of foreshortening which show observation and boldness beyond the common. Such as it is, the work at any rate satisfies up to a certain point the master's idea, as he descends from the scaffolding and scans it as a whole with critical glance, while the assistants prepare for departure. It will stand; no part needs to be obliterated, and all that now remains is to pare away at the edge of the finished work the surplus plaster still uncovered with pigment, so that it may be freshly laid in the morning for the morrow's task. As the shadows of coming night begin to descend, the apprentices lock the chapel door and turn homewards through the silent church.

§ 73. Summary of the foregoing chapters.

The foregoing three chapters have been occupied first with a brief notice of the somewhat complicated subject of the primal origins of art, and next with the illustration of the main theses of the first part of the book, that art represents an effort of the human spirit, under the stimulus of excitement, to externalize itself in some outward form or act, the resulting activity or product being always controlled by a principle of Order that brings it ultimately to a beautiful result. The modes of art dealt with have been those in which it is most easy to trace the connection between popular feeling, intensified by the social action and reaction of the festival, and expression in artistic form. The most universal, because the easiest and most available, media of artistic expression are personal adornment and the dance and song. That which each individual can do in these simple and impromptu modes of art, will be accomplished by the community at large in some general act, and this takes the shape of the erection, adornment and use of the festal structure. The festal structure made imposing and durable becomes the architectural monument, and round this the decorative arts, inspired to a nobler mission, throw a veil of significant and beautiful devices, in which sculpture and painting are set to some of their earliest tasks. Meanwhile the dance, no longer merely emotional or crudely mimetic, becomes expressive of ideas; it is seen how pose and gesture can become significant as well as beautiful, and the attempt to make these permanent leads to the rapid development of the art of sculpture. In Greece the popular religion made incessant demands for service from the arts, and as soon as sculpture had forced the marble and bronze to express character and thought, religion called for the creation in external form of divine and heroic types. In no very different spirit did medieval theology press the sister art of painting into her service, and set it to reproduce the sacred subjects so dear to the pious hearts of the people; till finally painting, taught in this way to be a mirror of human life, went on to reflect clearly and copiously all the gay and brilliant life of those festal scenes, in which from the first art had found its most congenial atmosphere. Whatever, in a word, were the forms of artistic expression, they came straight out of the heart of the people; and from the flagstaff of the rustic feast to the solemn temple on the Acropolis, from the gaudily dressed doll to the austere deity in marble or in bronze, from the civic procession to t monumental fresco which ennobled and fixed for ever, art in every shape was the child of t community at large.

In the next chapter the arts must be dealt wi from quite another point of view.

PART II

THE FORMAL CONDITIONS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

CHAPTER I

SOME ELEMENTS OF EFFECT IN THE ARTS OF FORM

§ 74. A new branch of the subject; the operation in different forms of Art of the principle of 'Order'

UP to this point the various forms of art have been dealt with as modes of expression or action, in which both the individual and society, under the stimulus of pleasure, quicken their sense of personal and common life in activities that are free and unconstrained, but at the same time of demonstrable value in the social economy. From the point of view we have hitherto taken, the particular mode of expression, whether it be the physical movement of the dance, the imitative work of the painter and sculptor, or the construction of the architect, has mattered little, for the aim has been to exhibit art in all its aspects alike as the nursling of society, the necessary outcome of a life that has scope for ideal desires and time to work for their fulfilment. The point of view must now be changed and the formal differences among the arts become the subject of investigation. The following discussion may not have the general interest of what has gone before, but the reader's attention is claimed for it with all the more confidence, since it forms a necessary transition to the after treatment in separate chapters of the three great Arts of Form.

We discovered in the earliest manifestations of art two elements—one an impulse, movement or act, often some form of 'play,' which supplies the motive power, or if we prefer the metaphor, the raw material of art; the other an instinct or principle of 'order' or 'arrangement' that may often be described as 'rhythm,' in accordance with which man is for ever moulding this material into an artistic form. We pass on now to an analysis of this artistic form, so far at least as this can be accomplished in words. It needs of course hardly to be said that such analysis of what may be termed the artistic element in the work of art, can only be carried out in a somewhat rough and perfunctory fashion. It would be impossible in words, even were they used with the finest discrimination, to match the subtlety of the artistic alchemy which transforms the heap of quarried stone, the marble block, the bare coarse-grained canvas and little heaps of coloured earths, into shapes and hues of majestic power or bewitching grace. All that can be attempted here is to deal broadly with certain conditions of artistic effect, applicable to all the arts alike or especially to Architecture, Sculpture and Painting.

§ 75. Every work of Art must present itself as a Unity.

The first operation of the instinct of ORDER when it evolves art out of play, is to secure for the artistic product a certain distinctness of general form. It is the first essential in the work of art that it should present itself as a unity, and not a mere formless mass of indefinite extension. The architectural monument obeys this law of which it is indeed the most conspicuous illustration, and so does the sculptured statue or group which is always more than a mere collection of figures, while the cabinet picture or decorative painting accepts the restraint of its frame or the limits of the panel or wall-space apportioned to it. Even in the drama the same law holds good. Only, as we have seen, in part an art of form, the drama unfolds itself in time as well as in space and cannot be visually grasped at a single moment. Yet it is of the essence of the drama, as distinct for instance from the romance or novel, that the material is worked up into so distinct a shape that every part belongs to every other, and the conclusion carries the mind back through all the stages of the action to the very beginning. While the romance has no fixed limits, the more concentrated drama proceeds by well-marked stages, and can be apprehended as a whole just as much as can a great building or a sculptured group.

In some cases the artistic whole thus constituted becomes in itself, as a single thing, in its broadest and most general aspects, an object for the æsthetic contemplation, and these cases will be discussed in the succeeding chapter. Most often however, the secret of the effect is to be found in the more or less subtle disposition of the various parts or elements, whatever they may be, which combine to make up the whole, or, in other words, in what artists know as 'Composition.' The present chapter is accordingly designed to deal with the elements that are thus employed in artistic composition, while the method and laws of their combination will be discussed in subsequent sections.

§ 76. Visual Impressions derived from the Arts of Form.

Since we are only concerned in this book with the Arts of Form, the impressions we have to do with are visual impressions, and are known in common parlance as impressions of form and colour and light-and-shade. These are accordingly the elements which make up the effect of the arts of Architecture, Sculpture and Painting, and to the analysis of these we must now turn our attention.

Scientifically speaking, all our impressions of form, both those of extended surfaces and those of solids, are not direct but mediate; they only result from certain processes of synthesis and inference. These processes however go on so rapidly that we have come to lose all consciousness of them, and for all practical purposes the ordinary convention of language may be admitted, and we may say that we *see* form just as we *see* colour and gradations of light.

As a fact, in looking for example at a group of buildings, though we only see differently shaped patches of light and shadow, we immediately derive from these the assurance of the presence of solid objects of three dimensions. Further we claim the privilege of paying attention specially to the *shape* of these patches of light-and-shade, and by a useful convention of language we call these boundaries *lines*, though lines properly speaking do not exist in nature. In artistic parlance effects of different degrees of light, or of light-and-shade, are often called effects of *tone*. Now light-and-shade or tone on objects (not in themselves luminous) depend on the amount of light reflected from their surfaces and this again on their greater or less distance from the eye, on the angle they present to the light, and *on their greater or less degree of smoothness.* A polished surface reflects almost all the light it receives, but when the surface is decidedly rough, its particles, being set at various angles to the impinging light, produce a play of extremely minute patches of light-and-shade over the whole space. Such roughness of surface results in the artistic quality of *texture*. Texture felt by the touch is some form or another of roughness, but to the eye it is revealed as a delicate mottling or play of light-and-shade, and is therefore connected with the artistic effect of tone. If therefore we say that we see in nature Tones, Textures, Colours, Forms and Lines, our language will, for the matter in hand, be sufficiently precise and comprehensive.

The arts of form, creating new shapes in architecture, and in sculpture and painting reproducing for us under certain conditions and limitations the shapes of nature, supply us with these same impressions arranged according to that artistic 'order' which is meant by the word 'composition.' Our next task is briefly to draw out the differences between architecture, sculpture and painting in the use they respectively make of these elements of artistic effect, and in doing this we shall endeavour to determine the special function of these several arts, and to form a clear idea of what to look for from each.

§ 77. The Elements of Effect in Architecture; Masses.

From architecture, as we have already seen (§ 19), and as will be explained more at length in the sequel, we receive primarily the impression of mass, and architectural composition is first of all composition of masses. As our impression of solid forms in general is derived partly from our experience in moving up to and around them, so architectural masses are things that we know by walking round and about them and ascending them, and, especially, by measuring them against ourselves. This comparison with ourselves has not a little to do with our estimate of architectural magnitudes. The 'measure of a man' is necessarily applied to buildings intended for human occupation and use. Such features as doors, windows, steps, seats, balustrades, and the like, have their normal dimensions indicated for them in this way, and hence when they exceed these dimensions, though their actual size may be nothing extraordinary, they take on themselves at once an air of grandeur. This is the case with the steps, generally three in number, forming the approach to the platform of the Doric temple. They are too high to be mounted in the ordinary way, and accordingly give an air of dignity to the whole access, as if the building were for giants.

§ 78. Lines in Architecture.

The architectural masses measured by us in this manner are bounded by definite contours, and architectural composition is in the second place composition of lines. The lines of architectural masses have their own distinct character. They are mainly rectilinear and have the general direction of horizontal and vertical—horizontal as corresponding with the level ground or base of the monument, and vertical as expressing elevation. The verticality of architectural lines is however modified by the statical requirements of an elevated structure, which is more stable if broader at the base than in the upper portions. Hence the appearance of oblique lines in architectural compositions (which also occur for other reasons, as when roofs have high-pitched slopes for throwing off rain and snow), and M. Viollet-le-Duc has even made the triangle on this ground the generating figure of architectural masses.[1] Curved lines in architectural compositions are mainly created by the use of the arch or vault in its

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[1] *Dictionnaire de l'Architecture Française*, Art. 'Proportion.'

various forms. In most cases the curves are parts of circles. The Assyrians, later Greeks and Romans, when they used the arch on a monumental scale, employed it in the form of the half-round. The pointed arch in western medieval architecture consists as a rule of two segments of the same circle meeting each other at an angle more or less acute. The Renaissance re-introduced the half-round. Though there is greater variety in the curvature of the elliptical arches of the Sassanid builders, in the Arab horse-shoes, or the Tudor ogee, yet these are comparatively exceptional forms when compared with those generated by the revolving radius. The entasis of the Doric column is marked by a very delicate curve and such also is the outline of the Ionic volute, the circle in both cases being discarded for curves of more varied contour, and this is also the case with most of the lines of carved ornament. The outline of an external dome like St. Peter or St. Paul or the Invalides is the most conspicuous and telling curved form in architecture, and though each side may be formed of a segment struck by the compasses, the shape of the whole mass is more pointed than that of a hemisphere.

§ 79. Light-and-Shade and Texture in Architecture.

In light-and-shade is found another important element of architectural effect. Wherever the general mass is broken into parts that recede or advance or are set at varying angles to each other, the incidence and reflection of the light are altered; but apart from this broad effect of light-and-shade over the whole monument, advantage is taken of any constructive feature, such as the projecting buttress, the recessed portal, the overhanging cornice, to strike a strong mass or line of shadow into or along the more illumined portions. On the outer façade of the Ducal Palace at Venice, in its present form a somewhat clumsy architectural composition, an excellent effect is produced by the blotches of deep shadow in the recesses of the two superimposed arcades. In the modern Scottish National Portrait Gallery at Edinburgh, the front of which so far recalls the Venetian façade, the arched openings are filled in with glass with a resultant flatness of aspect. Here however, owing to the north exposure, open arcades would not be so effective as at Venice.

The influence of light-and-shade in giving the particular value of *texture* to architectural surfaces has already been indicated (§ 76). In the distant view of a building it has been remarked that the decorative sculpture, the mouldings and other features of detail, losing their own individual shapes, are merged in a general effect of texture. Texture too is given by the 'rustication' or bossy treatment of stonework, which, under conditions to be afterwards noticed (§ 134), adds impressiveness to the lower stories of buildings in contrast with smoothed stonework above. There are, however, effects of texture of a somewhat different kind. A good deal of the pleasure we derive from old buildings is due to the varieties of surface-texture caused partly by irregularities of material and workmanship, partly by the corroding influence of time. It is possible to carry admiration of this last accidental quality too far, and there is a touch of modern affectation in the sentimental delight some take in time-worn brick or stonework, which after all was meant by its builder to be sharp of angle and even of grain. To claim this quality of texture as a necessary condition of artistic excellence in construction and carving would be, as we shall find (§ 121), a mistake, for wherever form reaches a really high standard of strength and refinement, texture, as dependent on accidental inequalities of surface, can be dispensed with without any loss.

In yet another sense texture gives a beauty to a building-material quite independent of any effect of weathering. The handling of the surface of the material, when it is a fine one, is a matter of the utmost importance, and there is no worse sin that can be committed by a 'restorer' than to let an unfeeling modern mason 'work over' the face of ancient ashlar. The original handling expressed the character of the material, and the resulting superficies has an æsthetic beauty derived from its intrinsic excellence, for the surface-quality is the outward expression of the molecular structure in virtue of which the material becomes the trusted vehicle of the architect's conceptions.

Texture in this sense is a noble and expressive æsthetic quality, very near to the essential character of architecture. It has been necessary to dwell upon it because it is often confounded with the quality of colour, with which, however, it has only an accidental connection. It is true, of course, that most materials weather to colour as well as to beauty of surface. Owing to the fact that Pentelic marble contains minute particles of iron, the old Athenian buildings have assumed in time a rich golden hue, now known to be nothing more nor less than rust; and every one has admired the delightful tints of old tiles and brickwork in our own domestic architecture. Beautiful also are the tones assumed by Portland stone in the atmosphere of the metropolis. The alternation of a greyish white and rich sooty black on the exposed and protected planes is singularly telling, and St. Paul, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and other structures in this material owe not a little to this effective peculiarity. Why other building stones should in the London air degenerate to a lifeless mud-colour, and the Portland stone tell out to all time so bold and bright, we need not inquire, but to this fact London owes not a little of such architectural charm as it possesses.

§ 80. Colour not an essential element in Architectural Effect.

Of Colour as an effect in architecture it must first be noted, that since the various building materials, stone, brick, timber, show considerable variety in hue, it is a legitimate sphere of the architect's work so to choose and arrange them as to produce a pleasing colour-scheme. To this extent an architect may even be said to compose in colour. The general tint of a building stone, the hue of brick or tiling, undoubtedly count for a good deal in architectural effect; and where two materials are equally good from the tectonic point of view, the one with a more pleasing colour is undoubtedly to be preferred. The inherent colour of a material is not however, like texture, an index to its actual constitution. It is more of the nature of an accident than the outward expression of structure, and ranks lower in architectural importance than texture. A good building material will look well and weather well, but need not be of any distinctive colour. Only when other things are equal should considerations of the colour of a material influence the choice of it. If, as is here contended, the architect who has a sense of the monumental will choose his stone or bricks primarily for their characteristics as building materials, and only in a secondary sense for their colour, then colour even in this most natural form of it is acknowledged to be a non-essential, though a valuable, quality.

Such employment of a pleasing single building material, or of polychrome materials which can be arranged in large masses, in bands or stripes, or in a mosaic-like chequer, is a different thing from the *painting or incrustation of architecture* indulged in so freely both in classical and medieval days. The outcome of this practice has been the production of a crowd of lovely structures old and new and in every land, of which colour is the distinctive charm. Colour in paint or inlay or panel or film of gold glances and glows from them all. There are the pylons of

Egypt gay with painted figures and picture script; the stuccoed walls of Babylonian palaces incrusted with enamelled tiles; the Mycenæan house that sparkled with metal appliques and inlayed pastes of oriental blue. The Greek temples were not pure white, but were pranked with coloured guilloche or fret and with golden stars on roofs of skyey blue, and threw up their decorative sculpture from a background of full vermilion or ultramarine. The huge Alexandrian piles of brick and concrete were faced with veneers of oriental marbles of every hue, and the same materials, sawn out of a hundred outland quarries, shone on the walls and pavements of Imperial Rome. The new Rome of Constantine rears above her varied marble walls domes all opulent within with golden mosaics, while the Early Christian artists of Ravenna, with finer taste, relieve against a background of blue their stately pictured forms of Apostle and of Saint. While the Byzantine tradition of colour, mingling with old oriental elements, kindles the golden lights and fires the deeper gules and azure of the fretted Moorish roofs, and further east the glories of Babylon are revived in the tiles and inlays of Bagdad or Ispahan, in the medieval churches of the north the interiors were aglow with paint and gilding in the carved woodwork, and with blood-reds in the hollow of the sculptured leafage and the mouldings, while the windows poured in a coloured light thrown back from the deeper hues of Saracenic hangings between the pillars of the nave arcades. The chapels and the halls of the Italy of the Early

Renaissance were habited within in every part with mural pictures, framed and extended by well-composed decorative motives. And, apart from these more ambitious structures, what a feast of colours, brilliant or subdued, is offered by the domestic buildings of wood and brick and tiling in all the lands of the North! Garish on Norwegian or Russian timber-houses, more mellow on the tiled cottage of Surrey or on Scottish harling, the tints of the homely fabrics seem to join with the splendours of church and palace to annunciate the universal rule of colour.

In spite of this body of evidence in favour of polychromy in architecture there can be no shadow of doubt that colour in this form also is no essential element of architectural effect. Colour in decorative fittings is of course to be taken for granted and has nothing to do with the question. Its architectural use in almost all the examples just noticed is in connection with inferior materials such as wood, plaster and rubble-work, in which the highest kind of monumental expression is impossible. The exceptions are the temples of Egypt and Greece, but here we can find an explanation of the use of pigment on stone and marble in the survival of older traditions of construction in wood. The stone temples of the Egyptians, Greeks and old Italians had once been wooden temples, and traces of timber practice remained on them throughout. Now to paint woodwork is an obvious and necessary process, preservative as much as ornamental, but this is by no means the case with the more durable stone, the finer sorts of which have higher beauties than those of local hue. Hence we may regard the painted *stone* architecture of the ancients as a survival from painted *wood* architecture, and may ignore its bearing on the æsthetic principle under discussion.

With these exceptions, all the notable instances of polychromy in the buildings instanced are of colour applied in veneers of a rich over a poorer material, or in the form of pigment on to wood or plaster. As a general principle, the nobler the material, the more monumental the spirit of a fabric, the less need will be felt for the adjunct of colour, and the architect can express himself completely in a single building material without surface decoration. This is proved by the work of Sir Christopher Wren. The builder of the City churches owed nothing to the painter or the carver, who are fondly regarded by some as ministering spirits essential to the welfare of architecture,[1] but satisfied his artistic aims with the one fine material at his disposal. Let us compare for a moment St. Peter in Rome with St. Paul in London. The former is finished externally in Travertine, the latter in Portland stone, and nc one in the present day would dream of applying paint to either exterior. The inner walls of the Roman church are of common rubble, and here the existing polychrome effect of the marble inlays and painted stucco is quite in place. Wren finished St. Paul in the interior with fine stone-work, leaving only the cupolas and spandrels of plaster over brick. These last he planned as fields for colour decoration, but there is no evidence that he ever contemplated the paint and gilding and marble veneers and stencilling and script, with which the fine surface quality and colour of the stone are now being marred. Monumental architecture in fine material, let us repeat, is independent of colour, which must be excluded from the list of architectural effects that are of the essentials of the art. Architecture then presents us with Masses, Lines, effects of Light-and-Shade and of Texture, and accidentally at times with pleasing appearances of Colour.

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[1] For this view see Ruskin's Preface to the 2nd Edition of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Two Paths*.

§ 81. The Elements of Effect in Sculpture: distinction between Sculpture in the Round and Relief.

The sculptor, like the architect, presents us with objects of three dimensions that offer us varying Contours with effects of Light-and-Shade and Texture, but in this case the objects are imitations of natural forms, most usually those of the human body and of the higher animals.

In dealing with the plastic art it is convenient to separate sculpture in the round from sculpture in relief. In the case of sculpture in the round the representation of nature is direct. A solid object is copied in all its three dimensions, and the work of art does not merely produce the impression of solid form but is actually in itself that form. In the case of the graphic art, whatever the impression we receive, there is never anything before us but a variously coloured and illumined surface of two dimensions only. Sculpture in relief however comes between the two, and partakes of the nature of graphic as well as of plastic art. Relief sculpture indeed begins at the same point as painting, and the two arts are in early times inseparably united. The outline sketched on wooden panel or slab of stone is the first operation in both these arts. This outline may then be incised so that the bounding line becomes a groove like that made by the **V**-tool of the wood-carver, but the delineation is still graphic. If the part within the outline be tinted or shaded to represent nature we have the beginning of painting, but if on the contrary it be rounded off towards the bottom of the groove, so as in any way to indicate the thickness of the object represented, then, however slight the relief thus produced, the result is a piece of plastic art. From this point more and more roundness and modelling can be added to the relief, while on his part the graphic artist can go on adding within the original outline as much light and shade and colour as he pleases. A certain graphic character will however always belong to the relief even when boldly modelled. The subject tells out primarily as a surface within a definite outline; and this surface is directly presented to the eye as in the graphic art. The third dimension or thickness of the object, on the other hand, is in relief-work only partially represented, not fully, as in sculpture in the round. Actual depth is shown, but not to the full extent required, the rest having to be made up by suggestion. In other words the third dimension of space is in relief sculpture expressed to some extent by a convention. The particular conventions of low and high relief by which the impression of solid form in its full depth is conveyed to the eye, together with certain points in the management of light-and-shade specially applicable to relief-work, will be noticed in the chapter on sculpture (§§ 163 ff.), and need not further concern us here.

§ 82. The Forms presented in Sculpture.

The solid Forms presented to us in sculpture are such as we can handle and embrace, and they waken in us all the associations we have been accustomed to connect with shapes in nature which may be touched and clasped. Such being the case, the question suggests itself whether or not sculpture addresses itself actually, as well as ideally and through association, to the sense of touch jointly with the sense of sight. If we measure a building by ourselves moving about it and around it, do we not in a corresponding manner estimate sculptured form by touching it?

This question happens to be raised in a curious passage in the Commentaries of the Florentine sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti, in which he remarks of a certain newly discovered antique statue that it had 'very many charms of such a kind that the sight cannot apprehend them, either in a strong or a tempered light; *only the hand by its touch can discover them*,'[1] and it may be asked whether the observation is one of general application. Few artists have been endowed with a more refined appreciation of form than Ghiberti; did he really consider that part of the effect of sculpture was derived from the sense of touch? It is obvious that in practice the application of the finger-tips to a finished work of sculpture would quickly result in unpleasing mementoes of the contact, while in time the surface texture, upon which many sculptors set such store, would suffer actual abrasion. It is clear therefore that works of the plastic art are made to be looked at, not handled, yet on the other hand the sense of touch is freely exercised during their production. The artist, working from the life, will actually *feel* his model, to assist him in securing the particular quality he desires in a subtly modelled part like the knee, and will test his own work in the same way by touch as well as by the eye.

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[1] *Commentario* III, in Le Monnier's Vasari, Firenze, 1846, etc., I. p. xii.

§ 83. Contour, Light-and-Shade, Texture and Colour in Sculpture.

Apart from the impression of solid form, a large part of the artistic effect of sculpture depends on Contour. Sculpturesque composition is not only a composition of masses, but to a great extent also composition of lines. The lines the sculptor works for differ from those of the architect in their greater variety and beauty. They are almost all curved forms, and among these portions of a circle are avoided. The utmost variety of curves, from those approaching though sensibly differing from the straight line to those of extremest flexion, are to be found in a good work of sculpture, every one bearing its part in the effect of the whole.

It is without avail for the modeller to elaborate the delicate rise and fall of his swelling forms, unless the impression of them can be properly conveyed to the spectator. As we have seen that the sense of vision is in strictness the only sense concerned, and as form is mainly revealed to the eye by light-and-shade, so the sculptor has to consider narrowly the lighting of his work. When it is an independent production like a gallery statue or relief, that can be moved wherever desired, the position and lighting can be arranged so as duly to throw up the forms, but when it is a decorative or a monumental work, designed for a predetermined situation or for the open air, the sculptor is bound to arrange his composition with relation to the proposed situation and surroundings of the piece. Light-and-shade as conveying the effect of form will thus have to be taken into consideration, and masses of light and shadow as forming by themselves an effective artistic display will also be provided as part of the impression of the whole.

Of Texture as an element in plastic effect more will be said in a succeeding chapter (§ 118). The effort after texture, a quality for the most part ignored by the Greeks, is very apparent in modern work, and on this depend some important questions about the art.

In regard to the element of Colour, a good deal which was said about its use in architecture applies also here, namely, that though it may be made an attractive adjunct, it is certainly not an essential element of sculpturesque effect. If the example of the ancients be quoted in favour of its use, the answer is that the ancients painted their stone statues just as they painted their stone buildings, more as a matter of tradition than of deliberate artistic choice.

§ 84. The Colouring of antique Sculpture.

The practice of the Greeks is so often invoked in discussions of this kind, that it is well to know in each case what the 'practice of the Greeks' really means. The Hellenic artist, it must never be forgotten, inherited old oriental traditions which were especially strong in matters of technique. Hence the technical processes of sculpture, employed by a Pheidias for the production of the world's masterpieces of the plastic art, were evolved from those that had been used from time immemorial for various kinds of decorative and architectural carving, and for the making of big dolls in the form of temple-idols.

(1) The use of colour on friezes, on pediment groups and metopes, and on other pieces of architectural carving, followed naturally from the traditional employment of colour on the building itself, about which a word has already been said. Colour here was inevitable, and we cannot argue from its use that the Greeks would have elected, as a matter of free artistic choice, to tint the ground of a relief or paint the dress and armour of a figure, when fashioned as independent works

of art. The colours used in this architectural sculpture were decorative not realistic. Shields might be painted blue on one side and red on the other, but not coloured so as to imitate bronze or leather.

(2) The independent statue, fashioned either in stone or wood, appears in the oldest Egypt, and has about it a good deal of that crude realism which marks the infancy of representative art. The epidermis is coloured to correspond with nature, the flesh of women being tinted a lighter hue than that of men, the eyes are represented often by some special material, the drapery is painted. The earliest statues of the gods in Greece were of a similar kind, only ruder and more childish in their realism than those of Egypt. The wooden doll (called 'xoanon') was made as lifelike as possible by being dressed up in real clothes with a wig of hair, and with accessories or arms in actual metalwork and jewelry. However barbaric such productions may have appeared in the eyes of later generations, they were as we have seen (§ 32), highly honoured from a religious point of view, and they left a deep mark on sculpture in its after development. The free-standing or seated statue in gold-and-ivory, in marble, or in bronze, appeared then as the lineal successor of the clothed or painted wooden figures, and the inlays of the first, the tinting of the marble, the partial incrustations of the bronze, were survivals which perpetuated the old traditions founded on the crudest realism. In the first case, though the wooden doll re-

mained, the clothes and wig disappeared with the painting on the face, and ivory was adopted for the flesh, as the lighter portion, with gold for the darker hair and for the vesture, the two materials being employed merely as inlays upon the original structure, or doll, of wood. In the case of early stone figures instruction is to be derived from the fragments of decorative compositions of the sixth century B.C. found not long ago on the Athenian Acropolis. Many of these are in a very coarse soft limestone, and the material was treated like the rubble or mud-brick of buildings finished in polychromy—it was entirely concealed under a complete coating of colour.

It is to be noted that in polychrome sculpture the colours applied to different parts were not necessarily naturalistic. Doubtless realism had been the original principle of selection in the remotest past, but in the course of time the colours had become merely conventional, and we find for example that the hair in painted statues was nearly always of a dark red hue.[1] One of the Athenian figures just referred to, popularly known as 'Bluebeard,' has the hair and beard of a strong azure! When the material of the statue was bronze, the taste of the Greeks rightly revolted from the use of pigment, and the colour effect was produced by total or partial gilding, by the use of coloured enamels, and by incrustations in differently tinted bronze or in other metals. Thus the eyes were made of silver, of costly stones, of enamel, and the lips were formed of separate pieces of bronze the special tint of which, differing from that of the general mass, would indicate the variety of colouring observable in these parts in nature.

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[1] This red tint was also used as the ground for gilding.

Polychromy in all kinds of ancient sculpture was accordingly based on immemorial tradition, and whatever view, as an abstract doctrine, the Greeks might have held about painting statuary, they would certainly for the above reason have used colour in their early efforts. The fact however that, so far as we can judge, such use decreased as time went on, is a safe proof that old habits of work had most to do with the practice in question. Not only in monumental but also in decorative sculpture, and even in mere architectural carving, colouring and other realistic additions, though not abolished, were gradually restricted in the later ages of classical art. While on the early Doric temple—as in the case of the Parthenon—the leaf ornament, generally an undeveloped form of what became later the 'egg-and-dart,' is painted on the moulding, in the Ionic style—as in the Erechtheum—it is carved as well as painted, and in later work, though it is difficult in such a matter to prove a negative, carved ornament probably often sufficed without the use of colour at all. The decorative figures in the oldest pediment compositions of the fifth century of which we possess substantial fragments (those from Ægina in the Munich Glyptotek) showed considerable use of colouring, especially on dress and armour, and had the accessory weapons, ornaments etc. added in bronze; but on the other hand, in the latest great architectural frieze known to us, the stupendous Battle with the Giants from Pergamon (in the Berlin Museum) dating about 200-150 B.C., the only sign of anything of the kind is said to have been the marks of pigment on the pupils of the eyes. The fragments of this composition, which were found in 1879 buried in the earth or covered with mortar and built up into a Byzantine wall, were in such a condition as regards surface preservation that had colour existed upon them it would almost certainly have survived. Further, while in the Parthenon frieze (of about 440 B.C.) as well as in the Ægina pediment just mentioned, attributes such as arms and horse-trappings were added in metal, in the frieze from Pergamon the most elaborate ornaments, together with arms and details of harness and the like, are carved out of the marble in which the whole is wrought. In independent statuary also there was on the whole less dependence on polychrome effects as time advanced. Bronze and marble, in the first place, rather than coarse stone or inlaid and incrusted wood, became the recognized materials for the temple-statue, and the former of these admits of but little addition in the way of painting. Colour clung still however to the marble, but here again the discoveries on the Acropolis have proved instructive. Besides the coarse limestone figures just noticed, many female statues in fine Parian marble came thus to light.[1] In these beautiful examples of the style of work prevailing before the Persian invasion colouring was not spread over the whole surface of the exquisite material, but special details such as the borders of drapery, the hair, the eyes, the lips, were picked out in forcible tints which remain on many specimens distinct to this day.

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[1] Coloured illustrations in *Antike Denkmäler*, Berlin, 1889, Bd. I. Taf. 19, 30.

Delicately applied in this manner, by a process known to the Latin writers as 'circumlitio,' colour seems to have formed a certain element of variable quantity in the effect of stone sculpture throughout the classical period. It was apparently the general practice of the later Greeks to tone down the gleaming whiteness of marble by the application of a single faint warm tint, the so-called γάνωσις, thus rendering the surface as a whole more harmonious and pleasing to the eye. This reduces colour almost to a negative function—that of mitigating the crude effect of dazzling whiteness in the marble, and there is nothing of the old childish realism in the practice. It is hard to say however whether or not this was still influencing later sculptors like Praxiteles, when they used the old touches of pigment on hair or lips or eyes, and added accessories of bronze. The Hermes by this artist found not long ago at Olympia showed traces of red colouring on the hair—perhaps as a ground for gilding—while there was also painting on the drapery. On the sandals the thongs were gilded over a red ground. In metal, probably gilded bronze, were added a circlet round the head, clasps on the sandals, and the attribute, doubtless the 'caduceus' or herald's staff, held in the left hand of the statue.[1] On a recently discovered masterpiece of a later period, the Augustus of the Braccio Nuovo of the Vatican, found at Prima Porta near Rome in 1863, there were remains indicating an extensive use of colour —crimson, purple and yellow on the drapery, blue on the elaborate reliefs that adorn the breast-plate.[2]

It is impossible to say with certainty how far such an embellishment of a marble statue was normal at the later epochs of classical art. No traces of colour have been found on the vast majority of the marble statues executed in Roman times as copies of Greek originals, but the Venus de' Medici is said to have had gilded hair. Late works in the so-called 'archaistic,' or revived-archaic style, which was in favour among Roman dilettanti (as for example the painted Diana from Herculaneum), imitate the polychrome effect of genuine antiques and cannot be adduced as evidence. The question both of the amount and of the real reason of colour on the works of the maturer periods of classical sculpture can hardly yet be said to be settled, nor is it easy to form a critical judgment on the æsthetic question involved. The artistic effect of the circumlitio which is still in evidence on those fine mature Greek works, the recently found sculptured sarcophagi from Sidon, is at any rate warmly commended by Professor Ernest Gardner in his *Handbook of Greek Sculpture.*[3]

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[1] Boetticher, *Olympia*, p. 331.

[2] *Denkmäler des klassischen Alterthums*, Munich, 1885, etc., Art. 'Augustus.'

[3] London, 1897, p. 430.

§ 85. The Colouring of Medieval Sculpture.

In the medieval period, polychrome architecture, and with it coloured sculpture, was in high repute, and a readily accessible example of importance is the interesting relic of the older church at Rheims built into the north transept of the Gothic cathedral. This fully-painted work, where we see a wall surface, ornamental carving, and a sculptured group of the Madonna and Child, all brightly tinted in greens and reds, is sufficient to show what a strong tradition of colour was handed down to the later medieval and Renaissance craftsmen. In Gothic interior detail a good deal of colouring was used, but as regards the exteriors, though traces of polychromy on the sculptured figures outside the French cathedrals were observed in the eighteenth century, the extent of its employment cannot now be determined. In Italian art all the wooden images, and they were innumerable, were gilded and coloured, and all works in terra-cotta (as was also the case in classical times) were treated with a complete colour scheme. On the other hand bronzes were only gilded, and the incrustations so common in classical times do not seem to have been in use. Marble, especially in the form of the decorative relief, was gilded or touched with colour, but not in so realistic a spirit as is evidenced in classical work. Monumental sculpture in stone however despised this embellishment, and one could not conceive of Michelangelo painting or gilding the David or the figures on the Medici tombs. Modern sculpture in marble down to our own time has depended on form alone, but there has been of late a revival of a feeling for polychrome effects, which will probably for a time come again into favour, though for purely decorative and not realistic reasons. In this connection it is instructive to note that as a rule the modern votaries of polychromy do not imitate the effect of Greek or Italian works as they must have appeared when freshly done, but only the half-faded suggestions on the marbles as they have come down to us caressed by the mellowing touch of time. A very tenderly-modelled marble statue of Susannah, by M. Th. Barrau in the Paris Exhibition of 1900 showed these timid suggestive hints at colour in a flush here and there on the skin or in the azure of a vein.

§ 86. The Elements of effect in the Graphic Art.

In turning now to the consideration of the visual impressions produced by the graphic art, we may say at the outset that though in strictness there are two forms of graphic delineation, painting proper and expression in black and white, yet these follow in the main the same laws, with the difference that painting makes use of the element of colour. The two forms of the graphic art may therefore for the present be considered together. When we pass from architecture and sculpture in the round to painting, we transfer ourselves to quite a different region of art, to which sculpture in relief only to a small extent serves as a transition. The first two arts express themselves in a perfectly clear and intelligible manner, so that every one can see what they are doing; but about the graphic art there is from the first something out-of-the-way that puzzles the untutored intelligence, and it is owing to this that the first steps in the development of painting are so hesitating and slow, and that the art is the latest of all the arts of form to arrive at a knowledge of its own capabilities. While architecture and sculpture were perfected in the ancient world, the mysteries of painting had not been fully explored until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of our era.

Of these mysteries the first is the indication upon a flat surface of the thickness of objects and their relative distance from the eye, and the second the representation of a collection of objects, practically unlimited both in size and number, upon a very restricted space of panel or canvas. In the power of conveying the impression of so much by means so straitened the graphic art stands quite alone, for though, as explained in § 165, relief-sculpture endeavours sometimes in imitation of painting to multiply the number of objects with which it deals, the effort can never be really successful. The painter's task is in no way increased in difficulty by the size and multiplicity of the objects which are his subject-matter, and he is just as ready to portray the whole face of nature as to represent a single thing close at hand. If the architect wish to give to us the impression of vastness and mass, he must pile stone upon stone into a structure both lofty and broad, but the painter without ever touching a mason's tool can bring a great building before our eyes. The sculptor can only affect us by moulding an actual solid shape, while on the painter's canvas a few strokes of the brush will create in our minds the impression of the same form. Nay more, painting can conjure up before us not only the single sublime or beautiful object, but all the scenes and spaces of nature that stretch away into illimitable distance, and can depict not only the form of objects but also their colour and variety of surface-tint and tone. The graphic art reproduces for us, in its own way, all the visual impressions we receive from the other arts of form, as well as all impressions of the same kind derived from external nature at large, and gives us accordingly the effects of sublime Mass, of beautiful Form and Contour, of Texture, of Tone or Light-and-Shade, and of Colour.

§ 87. Relation of Painting to the other Arts of Form.

Is painting then, it may be asked, just a compendium of all the other arts of form? In one sense it is, but its field of operation is not merely coextensive with theirs. In representing solid form it can reproduce for us the impressions of sublimity and beauty we receive from nature and from the works of man, but can only reproduce them in a very faint way compared with their vivid presentment in architecture and sculpture. Graphic delineation loses in fact in the intensity of the impression conveyed, in proportion as it gains over the other arts in breadth and copiousness. There are however certain parts of the field of artistic representation which painting has to itself, and here, where it does not come into any competition with its sister arts, we shall find the secret of its strength.

§ 88. The Essence of the Painter's Art.

Ask a painter who possesses the true instinct of his craft what it is in nature that he desires to reproduce, and he will answer that it is the surface appearance of things—not their form, their colour, their texture, their light-and-shade, severally and singly, but all these fused into one general impression. We may ramble with him through characteristic scenes of town or country and will note with surprise how he selects his subjects. A back-yard seen down through a dark entry will be to him a picture, while he remains completely indifferent to a palace façade in the sunshine. The most brilliant colours of the sunset sky give him no desire to take out his brushes, but a country road on a frosty morning will feast his eye with harmonies of tint that only a painter's glance can discern. What he looks for is not the thing but the appearance, and he will explain to us that this magical play of surface effect, which he loves, is a delicate thing as accidental as it is fugitive, and that it depends on the combined influence of the actual local colour and surface modelling of objects, with the passing condition of their lighting, and the greater or less clearness of the air through which they are seen. This combination results in the particular beauty for which he is always on the watch and which he will seize wherever he can find it. He knows well that it will appear in the most casual and unlikely places, in mean and ugly corners and upon the most ordinary objects of daily life, just as often as upon the mountain range or on the unsullied sky. Sometimes it will be a heap of litter, sometimes a maiden's face, that will be touched with this nameless charm. Things to the ordinary eye most beautiful may be barren of it, while it will touch and glorify a clod. To reproduce it adequately demands a skill of touch that seems like the most accomplished sleight-of-hand, and that can only be achieved by an executant who enjoys rare natural gifts developed and aided by long practice of the art.

Such work as this, that gives back nature just as she is seen, in the most direct and simple manner, is the crown and flower of the painter's craft. The secret of it lies in not troubling about the *facts* of nature but devoting attention only to her outward seeming. All the painter need strive to do is to reproduce for us the *appearance* of objects as visual impressions, and these impressions, if we take what we actually *see* (§ 76), are of differently coloured and illumined spaces or patches which to the eye seem to be of two dimensions only. If these be rightly copied, then, so far as it is the work of the painter to represent nature, that work is done. If therefore the graphic artist will forget all that he knows about the real shape of objects and about their relative distances, and will attend only to what he actually sees, he will achieve a representation of nature that is both direct and clear, and that only his particular art is able to compass. The painter who can do this has attained the summit of his art, and can work henceforth in as free and straightforward a manner as the sculptor. This however, which seems in theory the simplest possible process, is in practice the most difficult thing in the representative part of painting, and is only compassed by the greatest masters of the art.

There is nothing more rare in ordinary procedure than that beautiful and thoroughly artistic treatment of nature in which she is apprehended as light-and-shade and colour only, the form being nowhere insisted on, though nowhere inaccurately rendered. In such work the subtle transitions, the play of tone, and tone and colour combined, over the face of nature, the mystery and enchantment of beauty in which her aspect is veiled, are all reproduced again for us upon the canvas, and the sharp lines and mapped-out appearance of ordinary painting give place to a suggestion of forms which is after all their truest delineation. Such rendering of nature we see in landscape under the brush of Turner or of Corot, in figure work in Correggio, Velasquez and Rembrandt, in John Phillip and Millais among the moderns. It is in the mature work of such masters of the painter's craft that we find that truly artistic, yet in the best sense accurate, treatment noticed above. This, which is termed by Sir Charles Eastlake the 'mastery by which the flat surface is transformed into space, so fascinating in the judicious unfinish of a consummate workman,'[1] is well exemplified in the later pictures of Frans Hals, of whom Vandyke is reported to have said that 'he had never known anyone who had the brush so entirely in his power, so that when he had sketched in a portrait he was able to render the essential features in light-and-shade with single strokes of the pencil, each in the right place, without altering them and without fusing them together.'[1]

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[1] *Materials*, II. p. 262.

Velasquez, a more exquisite painter, has the same power of giving back the life of nature in all its varied subtleties by means of free broad strokes that do not seem to follow any contours, but when the spectator is at the right distance, make the form appear to stand out with startling vividness and relief. In one of his very latest works, the portrait of the Infant Philipp Prosper at Vienna, as a child of two years old, the white drapery, the minute fingers, the delicate baby face from which look out great eyes of darkest blue, are all indicated with touches so loosely thrown upon the canvas that seen near by they are all confusion—yet the life and truth are in them, and at the proper focal distance nature herself is before us. The touches combine to give the forms, the local colours, the depth, the solidity of nature, while at the same time the chief impression they convey is that of the opalescent play of changing tones and hues which, eluding the limitations of definite contours, make up to the painter's eye the chief beauty of the external world.

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[1] Houbraken, *Groote Schouburgh*, s'Gravenhage, 1753, I. p. 92.

§ 89. How the Painter is prepared for his Work.

Seeing now that this treatment of nature is at once so fine and so difficult, representing the ideal at which all true painters must aim but which only the greatest fully reach, it might have been expected that the graphic artist's method of training and practice would have all been directed towards fitting him for the accomplishment of this special task of his art. As a matter of fact however, the painter's education and his early practice seem rather designed to make this free broad general delineation of nature's aspect as difficult to him as possible. As a general rule in our schools of art the learner is not taught to look at nature as she actually appears, as tone and colour, but is obliged, first, mentally to translate that tone and colour into terms of form, and, next, to abstract from the resulting forms their boundaries and nothing more, reducing in this way the whole to *lines* alone. This method of beginning with outlines is open to the obvious objection that it ignores the aspect of nature as a whole, and attends only to the parts. It breaks up what should always remain one, and it asks the delineator to substitute for what he really sees, certain conventions arrived at by a process of abstraction. On this ground it is every now and then sharply criticized; '*Do not begin with outlines*,' some say, '*but with the tones which you actually see*'; and the method in question has only held the field because, though illogical and inartistic, it has certain practical conveniences. The fact is that nature, when viewed in all her subtle and melting loveliness, is too complex for the untrained eye to seize. The strong framework which underlies her gleaming outward show, and which the master draughtsman like Hals or Velasquez always lets us feel beneath his soft transitions of tone and colour—the anatomy so to say of nature—is not easy to apprehend, and the effort of the untrained eye and hand would be liable to end only in vagueness.

The practice of the greatest painters lends indeed a sanction to this traditional method of teaching the graphic art. They all begin by emphasizing form, and divide their objects off from each other by comparatively definite outlines and marked patches of shadow. Velasquez does this and Correggio, Rembrandt too and Hals, John Phillip and Millais, and it is not till they have served their time of apprenticeship that they reveal to us the magic of their art. It is in their mature and later work that we find the free and masterly rendering spoken of above. The same phenomenon meets us in the history of the graphic art in general. The earliest painters did not look at the whole face of nature, but only had eyes for a few near objects; even these they did not apprehend as a whole, as a show of tone and colour, but rather as forms, and in rendering them as forms attended, like the beginner at the modern art school, only to the outlines. The outline filled in with simple tints, with no variety of internal markings or indication of the thickness of objects and their comparative remoteness, is the standard form of the graphic art in ancient Egypt and in Greece, though in the latter country it was carried some steps further in advance. The same character belongs to the art during the middle ages, and it was not till the fifteenth century that it began to come to a knowledge of its own capabilities. Graphic delineation then advanced rapidly through certain stages that will be described in detail in the chapter on Painting Old and New, and attained perfection in the hands of the great masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who were able at last to give an artistic rendering of the aspect of the world in all its outward charm. It seems, in fact, to be a necessity of the case that analysis should precede synthesis, and the *parts* of painting should be attended to first rather than the *whole*. There is accordingly one kind of undeveloped painting that gives us only outlines, another kind that reproduces for us in a clear-cut mechanical way the impression of solid forms, a third that gives us light-and-shade, a fourth that emphasizes colour, while perfect painting will render directly tone and colour and texture all at once, and will convey thereby an indirect but true impression of form and distance.

§ 90. Imperfect forms of the Graphic Art; Line-drawing.

This last kind of painting will form the theme of the special chapter on the art, but a word may here be said on those more limited effects just noticed. Pure line, expressing form through a convention, and for its beauty depending on deft combination of curves, is common to the graphic art and to sculpture in relief. The contours of a piece of sculpture in the round vary as the spectator moves, but when drawn on a panel or incised on a marble slab, lines are comparatively distinct and fixed, and become more definite objects of study. Generally speaking it is the sculptor, or the painter who has most affinity with the plastic art, that delights in composition of lines, and of this Flaxman is a conspicuous modern instance. The Greeks had great power in the simple outline, as we may judge from the finer draughtsmanship on their vases and engraved mirror-backs, of which good examples are to be found in the British Museum.[1] Probably the single figures by their greatest painters, such as the Helen of Zeuxis, or the Aphrodite rising from the Sea of Apelles would have presented the most perfect use of line that art has ever known. For *expressive* manipulation of line, as distinct from that which aims chiefly at beauty, Holbein is supreme. No graphic artist has ever equalled him in the power of analysing the complex impression of nature and giving back what is essential by means of line only. His studies in line for portraits, preserved at Windsor and elsewhere, are unsurpassed in art for the amount that is conveyed in them by the very slightest means.

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[1] See, for example, a notable kylix or shallow bowl from Kamiros in Rhodes, representing in exquisitely traced outline Aphrodite riding on a Swan (among the vases of the finest period).

§ 91. Representation of Solid Form in the Graphic Art.

Outline is just the boundary of a space of two dimensions, and those outlines which we see, or rather create by a process of abstraction, in nature, can be transferred directly to the canvas or panel. The representation on the other hand of solid form and of distance is a somewhat different matter, and claims a moment's special attention.

We have already seen that the impression of solid form and of distance (which is just space at large in its third dimension) can be conveyed most perfectly by the graphic artist when he ignores them as facts, and renders only the appearance of the face of nature. If he get his patches of light-and-shade and colour exactly right, solid forms will appear to stand out in his picture as they do in nature; and if the different delicate gradations of tone, that are marked on objects in accordance with their relative distance from the observer, be reproduced on the canvas, then the eye will appear to travel back through various planes to the most remote regions of space. The evolution of the graphic art however, both at large and in the case of the individual draughtsman, shows us that solid forms and distance only come to be properly represented *as appearances* when the facts of them are first realized as material truths. The artistic rendering we have already considered only comes at the end of a long process of work, which consists in laboriously copying form as form, and transferring the receding planes of nature to the upright plane of the

re by a conscious effort of translation. It
seem paradoxical to say so, but the art
nt is often too conscious of what he is doing
it rightly. It ought to be no more difficult
im to draw a foreshortened limb than one
ht before him, and it would not be more
ult provided that he were content to delineate
ly what he sees and that only. Through the
of habit, however, he persists in thinking all
ime of the actual length of the limb which he
s by experience, and will nearly always make
o long in his drawing of its foreshortened
t. Similarly, in drawing an interior view or
lection of buildings presenting various angles
e line of sight, he need only attend to differ-
shaped surfaces and their boundaries, but he
ot get it out of his mind that these surfaces
n many cases not really upright before him,
receding more or less sharply from his eye.
nixes up, that is, considerations of the *depth*
nows to exist with those of the *extension*
h is all he really perceives, and feels helpless
puzzled till aided by a certain device called
ective, which helps him to draw the lines
ding these surfaces with correctness, and
lies him with a certain set of conventions
ing to all cases where forms of three dimen-
have to be represented on a plane surface of
two. He need not necessarily use these con-
onal rules whenever he draws from nature,
it will be found in practice that simple
htsmanship, dependent on the eye alone,
suffice for ordinary scenes of landscape and

sky with distant buildings and the like, but will not be accurate enough for interiors and for near architectural views full of apparently sloping lines that converge or recede at every possible angle.

§ 92. Graphic delineation as aided by Perspective.

It is only in virtue of some external help, some suitable set of conventions, that the draughtsman of ordinary powers, puzzled as he is by the consciousness that things are not as they seem to be, can get these oblique lines all into their right positions, and hence the value of perspective science. Now there are two things that perspective can accomplish for the painter. It can help him to represent correctly what he actually sees before him ; it can also enable him to construct on his paper a plausible delineation of objects not actually in view or not in existence at all. The preliminary conditions required for the orthodox practice of perspective, are correct knowledge as to the actual size, shape and position of all the real or assumed objects to be included in the view. The draughtsman must have a ground-plan of all that section of nature embracing the objects in question, with elevations drawn to scale of buildings and similar forms introduced. Where it is only *supposed* objects that are to be drawn, their position, shape and size must be predetermined with the same clearness and accuracy. Given these conditions, the process of delineating the objects to be copied or constructed follows according to certain formulæ calculated to secure mathematical correctness in the result. No reference need be made to nature at all. If the plan and measurements give the data required, the process of forming the representation is a purely mechanical one and in no way artistic. We have then this somewhat anomalous result, that a correct delineation of a set of complex objects in nature can be produced in two entirely different ways. One way is by pure draughtsmanship, the hand merely reproducing directly what the eye sees without any inquiry as to the actual position or shape of the objects; the other way is by pure science, the delineation being constructed piece by piece on a basis of the knowledge of this actual position and shape, without any draughtsmanship about the matter.

In the practical daily work of the painter (as distinct from that of the architectural draughtsman), the preliminary conditions required for the orthodox performance of perspective rites are as a rule unattainable. He does not possess, and will not trouble himself to procure, the needful plans and measurements. The service that perspective will render to him will be of a more rough-and-ready kind. Its chief value will be in introducing a principle of order and arrangement into the complex network of oblique lines presented, say, by a group of buildings seen at different angles. As a matter of actual fact if the draughtsman went up to and examined the buildings in question he would find on each a great number of sets of parallel lines; in the case of each elevation there would be the lines of base and of cornice and of roof ridge, of all the horizontal string-courses, of the sills and lintels of the windows, etc., all parallel to each other—and so on throughout the buildings. Now when the elevations are seen at an angle these lines are no longer in appearance parallel, but perspective teaches us that they still preserve a relation to each other of such a kind that if we can draw one of them correctly we can immediately go on to draw all the rest. In other words perspective enables us in such a case to divide the lines of a complex view into certain groups, formed in each case by lines actually parallel to each other, and to know that when one line of a group is fixed all the rest will readily fall into their places according to a predetermined formula, all in fact seeming to converge towards a certain imaginary point called a vanishing-point. There are other ways in which perspective offers practical help to the draughtsman ; besides providing him with these vanishing points to which to draw his sloping lines, it will enable him to fix the proper height for the figures introduced into his picture on whatever plane of distance they stand, and in other respects will lighten his labours. The substantial aid which is thus afforded to draughtsmanship is sufficiently attested by the fact that, till the science was studied in the fifteenth century, artists, however sure of eye, had not been able to draw correctly the raking lines of buildings, or properly reduce objects according to their distance. The ancients, skilled delineators though they were, blundered over these tasks, and Pompeian wall paintings exhibit the wildest mistakes which would now be impossible to any one who could hold a pencil at all. The medieval draughtsmen, including even a Giotto, were almost equally uncertain: and the fact is an additional proof of what was said above—that though it is the ideal of the graphic art to represent form merely through artistic rendering of tone and colour, yet in practice form must be studied first as form, and in the light of perspective science, before such free delineation becomes possible.

§ 93. Aerial Perspective and its Study.

The same may be said about the rendering of distance, or the third dimension of space at large. The relative distance of objects is mainly revealed by differences in their light-and-shade and colouring. There is less reflected light from distant objects, less intensity of shade on them, less saturation of colour. If these gradations of tone and of colour be rightly given, then the effect of distance is truly represented. It is possible therefore to convey all the effect of distance merely by direct copying of patches of tone and colour. But here again the history of the art shows us that this direct rendering is the ultimate result, not the beginning of painting. Distance was no more correctly given in the old time than was perspective-form. It was simply ignored in favour of the few near objects which were all the theme of graphic art till the fifteenth century. Only when the science of rendering distance, or aerial perspective as it is termed, was taken up and made a special subject of study in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, did the field of painting come to embrace what it embraces in modern times—the whole aspect of nature in all its infinite extent and variety.

§ 94. Colour in the Graphic Art.

The foregoing considerations will have explained what is meant by the common statement that the graphic art represents the third dimension of space and distance by a convention. The statement, as we now see, is both true and false—true of the ordinary mechanical process of drawing, but incorrect of the mature work of the really accomplished modern painter, whose rendering is not conventional but direct. This will suffice on the subject of the rendering of Form in painting, and there remain the effects of Colour and Light-and-Shade. These are of course perfectly rendered in the mature modern style of painting established by the practice of men like Correggio, Rembrandt and Velasquez, but they are so magically blended that we can hardly say what is light-and-shade and what is colour; while in the case of colour we fail to distinguish separate primary or secondary hues, and receive the impression of broken tints combining into greys with certain predominant tendencies, rather than that of positive pigments from the paint-box. There is a science of colour which tells us how tints affect each other by their proximity or in their succession one to another, but this science is more a matter of concern to the decorative artist than to the painter of pictures. The former employs positive tints in comparatively large masses, and the study of the theory of colour is to him a distinct part of his professional training.

In the cabinet-picture the colour-effects are so subtle that only the native artistic tact of the painter can deal with them. He may know, as Sir Charles Eastlake tells him, that 'Flesh is never more glowing than when opposed to blue, never more pearly than when compared with red, never ruddier than in the neighbourhood of green, never fairer than when contrasted with black, nor richer or deeper than when opposed to white,'[1] and he will use the knowledge by working for combinations of broken colour and not for contrasts of definite tints. In fact it is only in virtue of his having been born a colourist, that he will know how to bring clear harmonies out of these varied notes in all their exquisite gradations. Rembrandt is a master-colourist but seldom gives us a patch of positive tint. All his hues are saturated with the golden brown which flooded his palette and gives the predominant colour-effect of all his canvases. Correggio fuses his gayer and more opalescent tints into the lovely greys of a misty sky at dawn, and gives us not so much gold and pink and rose, as golden-greys flushing into red with pearly neutrals in the half-tints. Corot paints in greys just kindling into more positive hues. A classic instance of the painter's treatment of colour is the Blue Boy by Gainsborough at Grosvenor House, London. Every one knows the story of it; how Reynolds had laid down the principle that the chief mass of colour in a picture could never be a cold tint like blue, and how his great rival painted his portrait of Master Buttall clad entirely in that hue, as a practical rejoinder. As has often been remarked, Gainsborough so broke up his blues with warm greens and browns that the effect of a mere mass of the single pigment gives place to that of a delightful harmony, with blue only as the dominant note.

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[1] *Materials*, II. p. 309.

It is true that we only find this free and fluent handling of colour among the really great masters of the brush. Both in older and in modern times there have been innumerable graphic artists to whom the name 'painter' cannot be disallowed, who have used colour in patches more or less distinctly defined and positive in hue. The old painters before the sixteenth century employed colour in this definite way, and such was throughout the practice of the frescoist. Wherever indeed the strength of painting lies in its clear delineation of form, there colour will be used mainly in subordination thereto, and will serve to mark the boundaries of forms, tint being laid over against tint within defined outlines. Work of this kind misses the peculiar charm of painting, of which so much has already been said. It may have excellent qualities of its own but from the point of view of pure painting it is imperfect. The outline filled in with colour is no more the ideal of the graphic art than is the outline alone.

On the other hand painting may convey the impression of colour only, without any suggestion of nature. This is the work of the decorator, who may provide for the eye, as in oriental textiles, a feast of colour of the most delightful kind without any hint of form. This cannot, however (see § 112), be held to constitute a form of painting as a fine art. On the one hand the colours are not so subtly broken and blended as in advanced oil painting, and on the other, there is none of that representation of nature which is an essential element in the graphic art. There are modern painters, such as Monticelli, who execute studies in colour with very little reference to the forms of nature. Here we have colour artistically broken and blended and perhaps a suggestion of nature, but the slightness of the suggestion precludes such works from ranking as fully developed painting.

§ 95. Texture in the Graphic Art.

The effect of texture in painting is a necessary adjunct to the effect of mingled tone and colour that we enjoy in the finest manifestations of the art. Texture, as it appears to the eye, results from surface modulations of light-and-shade so minute as to blend together in one single impression. This effect can be rendered perfectly by a very skilful use of the brush, achieving what Sir Charles Eastlake has termed the combination of 'solidity of execution with vivacity and graces of handling, the elasticity of surface which depends on the due balance of sharpness and softness, the vigorous touch and the delicate marking—all subservient to the truth of modelling.'[1] When oil-pigment is handled in this supreme fashion its own texture upon the canvas is lovely and delightful. Alfred Stevens even remarks that 'the execution of a fine piece of painting is pleasing to the touch';[1] even the way in which it cracks reveals its quality.[2] Painting which has in itself this quality fittingly renders the sensitive play of surface on the things of nature. Without actually imitating by the texture of the pigment the texture of the object delineated—a trick possible, but of doubtful artistic value—the paint can so be laid on the canvas as to suggest that peculiar beauty of objects under certain accidents of lighting, which we have seen to be the special quality in nature that the graphic artist and he alone can render.

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[1] *Materials*, II. p. 261.

§ 96. Light-and-Shade in the Graphic Art.

There remains the rendering by the graphic art of Light-and-Shade. This is so characteristic a feature of the art that in modern times a special form of the graphic art has been occupied with this alone. Up to the fifteenth century the mere outline drawing or monochrome study had been often employed by itself for decorative or recording purposes, or else as a first stage towards painting. The more extended use of Black and White as independent means of artistic expression dates from about the fifteenth century, and was connected then with the invention of printing and the consequent spread of an interest in the acquirement of knowledge among all classes of

[1] *Impressions sur la Peinture*, Paris, 1886, No. cciv.

[2] *Ibid.* No. xci.

the people. The earliest engravings, especially in Germany, the home of the printer's art and seat of the Reformation, were as a rule of religious import, and were issued singly or bound together as 'block-books,' the picture being accompanied by a few lines of illustrative text. They were, that is to say, strictly delineations, claiming attention by reason of their subject and not for any formal artistic beauty. The technique by which the first engravings were produced was itself of immemorial antiquity, but had not been employed for the multiplication of designs on paper until this epoch. The engraving was of two kinds; either incised lines were cut with a graver on a plate of metal, or raised lines were produced on a block of wood by the cutting away of the surface in the intermediate portions. The incised or projecting lines were then filled or coated with ink, and the paper to receive the impression was pressed firmly against them. Now incised designs on metal plates had already been made by the ancients, especially in the form of decoration for the backs of mirrors, and in the medieval period such practice had continued,[1] with the addition that the incised lines were often filled in with a black paste or cement producing the so-called niello-work. German and Italian goldsmiths of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries made designs for niello on plates of silver, and may often have taken proofs by inking the lines and pressing paper against them, for the purpose of seeing the effect of the drawing in black.[1] Wood-blocks also, with the lines of the design in relief, had been used by the Egyptians and Romans as stamps for bricks, and further they had been employed during the middle ages both in the East and the West for stamping designs on texile fabrics. The plate and block were therefore ready to hand, and the novelty in the fifteenth century was the use of them to multiply impressions, which were then issued as independent works of art of a popular kind. From this point the development of work in black-and-white followed that of the graphic art as a whole. It began with clear delineation by means of outlines, and then advanced to the rendering of the effect of solid forms by means of light-and-shade, in which shape the art was perfected by Albrecht Dürer. It was still selected near objects, rather than the face of nature as a whole with all its planes of distance, that was represented, until the art passed under the hands of Rembrandt. Then it was that it came as it were to a knowledge of itself, and developed at once into an art producing its effect directly by means of gradations of tone, though representing indirectly solid forms and distance. Such has continued to be the character of the art in modern times whenever it has been employed in its full scope, and in correspondence with this are the modern processes of etching and mezzotint. Works carried out in these and other similar processes differ from the older line engravings and wood-cuts in the characteristic that they represent masses of tone rather than outlines, and though the etcher works with a line it is becoming more and more the custom to depend for part of the effect on broad tints independent of lines, that are produced by the manipulation of the printer. The aim of the etching and mezzotint is to reproduce all that 'play of effect' over the surface of things already spoken of, with the omission only of colour, and as far as possible they ignore mere outline.

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[1] At the bases of the 'towers' set round the great crown-light in the Minster at Aachen, a work of the twelfth century, there are copper-plates with incised designs, and it is interesting to know that impressions were actually taken from these in a copper-plate printing press for publication in Bock, *der Kronleuchter Kaisers Friedrich Barbarossa*, Leipzig, 1864.

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[1] Vasari tells us that this was done (certainly not for the first time) by Maso Finiguerra, a Florentine goldsmith, about 1460.—*Opere*, ed. Milanesi, v. p. 365, *Vita di Marcantonio Bolognese.*

Light-and-shade drawing has proved itself so efficient in suggesting the forms and spaces of nature by means of tone, that the graphic artist can now produce the effect he desires by abbreviation. A rough sketch consisting of a few lines or blots by a skilled hand will convey to us the impression of form or space or darkness and light. The older artists of the pre-Rembrandtesque period would never have attempted anything of the kind. What they drew they delineated clearly and completely so far as their vehicle allowed. The moderns delight in feats such as this described of the late Charles Keene, to whom an artistic friend watching him at work in his studio remarked, '"I can't understand how you produce that effect of distance in so small a picture." "O —easy enough," replied Keene, "Look here,"— and—*he did it.*' But when and how he gave *the* touch which made the effect, his frien(his work closely, was unable to disco\ to the eyes of a public well accustomed tion in black-and-white would these d of an accomplished draughtsman appe: for the reality of nature.

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[1] F. C. B. in *Punch*, 17th January 189

CHAPTER II

THE WORK OF ART AS SIGNIFICANT

§ 97. Beauty and Significance in Works of Art

THE preceding chapter has been occupied with an analysis of the impressions conveyed to our minds by the several arts of form. Works of art present us with effects of Mass, with Compositions of Forms and Lines, with a show of Colour and of Light-and-Shade. The æsthetic pleasure we derive therefrom may be analysed from the points of view of psychology and ethics, but this analysis lies outside the scope of the present treatise. Without entering on the philosophy of the subject, it may be enough for us here to know that works of formative art do give us pleasure of a disinterested and lasting kind, and this for two reasons; partly because they are *beautiful*, and partly because they are *significant*.

This association of significance with beauty as elements of effect in the arts of form, is opposed to the view of some modern critics, who assert that a work of art should be beautiful and nothing more.

The argument on which they chiefly rely to support this view is derived from the art of music. As music, they say, delights the ear by a succession of lovely sounds, so architecture, painting and sculpture should delight the eye by lovely forms and hues. As the sounds of music are mere sounds and mean nothing, so the colours and forms in question should be colours and forms and nothing more.[1] That they express or symbolize ideas, or represent anything in nature, is an untoward accident, to be as far as possible ignored. A picture, according to this theory, should be as much as possible like a Persian carpet, and present a beautiful combination of colours and pleasing harmony of tones, without any complications arising from 'subject' or truthfulness to nature, while architecture and sculpture should offer agreeable combinations of lines and masses, without dabbling in symbolism or idealization of the human form.

Fully to discuss the questions thus raised would require a volume, and it will only be possible here to bring forward one or two reasons for retaining the term 'significance' side by side with that of 'beauty' in the connection just indicated. The theory under consideration possesses an attractive simplicity, but the facts of life render it nugatory. If painting and sculpture were to cease to reproduce the scenes and objects of nature, and architecture to minister to the real or ideal needs of men, such a theory of the arts of form might suffice. As it is, however, the shapes and tones and colours presented in the arts of form are not merely visual impressions, but are continually appealing to trains of association in our minds. Around the persons or scenes or objects, of which the counterfeit presentment comes before us in painting and sculpture, we have woven associations of pleasure or pain or interest, so that they have become to us no longer mere things but part of the furniture of our intellectual and moral life. The divisions of the architectural mass, on which the beauty of its composition depends, are conditioned by the social purposes which the interior spaces have to serve, and with these purposes we are more or less familiar and sympathetic. We cannot therefore look on the counterfeit presentments, or on the divisions of the edifice, without some stir of memory or anticipation which testifies to the human interest with which they are charged. These associations exist indeed in connection with almost everything that can be seen or suggested alike in nature and in art.

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[1] 'As music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight, and the subject-matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of colour. . . . Art . . . should stand alone, and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like.'—J. M'Neill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, London, MDCCCXC, p. 127.

§ 98. Art is Significant as appealing to Natural Symbolism; (A) in Light and Colour,

This being the case, it may be doubted whether any of our impressions of tones or colours or forms are really simple and immediate, and not rather in each case complicated by an element of association which contributes to the ultimate effect on our minds. Wundt remarks that 'many psychologists . . . assert that every sensation arouses some accompanying ideas, and that the affective action of the sensation is due in every case to these ideas,'[1] but this distinguished authority does not share this view. Analysing the impressions of light and colour and form, he finds in them an immediate element by which they affect us in independence of recollection, and the possibility of this must be admitted in any account of the different kinds of pleasure we take in a work of art. It will save confusion if this whole subject be briefly dealt with in the present and following sections, though in strictness our seemingly direct impressions of light, colour and form should receive their notice in the chapter on the Work of Art as Beautiful.

The simplest impression we derive through the sense of vision is that of light. The unconstrained exercise of any power that is in good working order and responds to a normal stimulus is pleasurable, and accordingly light that is not too strong gives pleasure through the sense of seeing. The apprehension of differences in the amount of light reflected from surfaces, and the comparison of these, may also be pleasant, and at times shadow may be grateful as a rest from light. It is surprising however how soon this simple satisfaction in the exercise of the sensory faculties passes into impressions of a more complex kind in which there is present a certain intellectual element. In the beginning the greater or less illumination of a surface is a merely physical fact which brings about corresponding photo-chemical changes in the delicate retinal apparatus of the eye. But with our consciousness of these will probably be associated 'subjective complements of the sensations,'[1] that is, some memories of former impressions or some related ideas which mix with and modify the total effect. For example, the words 'light' and 'dark' express certain physical facts that can be scientifically measured; 'high-' and 'low-in-tone' give the equivalents in the technical language of the painter; but if we adopt instead the synonyms 'bright' and 'gloomy' we feel that there has crept in a certain ethical significance. It is impossible to dissociate ideas of an ethical kind from the daylight and the night, the dawn and the twilight, and a certain suggestion of these ideas connects itself with our apprehension of light and dark in tone-studies. In such studies as the etchings of Rembrandt or Turner's mezzotints in the *Liber Studiorum*, the mere contrasts and transitions are apprehended with a sort of physical pleasure which is quickened to artistic appreciation as we note the skill with which the tone-composition is carried out, while over and above this the sentiment of the piece, in its appeal to all the ethical content of the ideas of gloom and radiance, will carry the impression of it up into the higher regions of consciousness.[2]

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[1] *Outlines of Psychology*, American translation, Leipzig, London and New York, 1897, p 77.

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[1] Wundt, *Ibid.* p. 74.

[2] Yriö Hirn writes of 'the melancholy which can be expressed, without any anthropomorphic element, by a mere relation between light and shadow.'—*Origins of Art*, p. 138.

Next to the impressions of achromatic light, those of chromatic light, or colour, are the simplest and most direct of all which come to us from works of art. It is a fact to which all persons of artistic sensibility will testify, that certain colours are pleasurable in themselves, without there being any question of harmony or contrast of tints. Others are in themselves harsh and unpleasing, and such persons suffer positive pain when confronted with old-fashioned aniline mauve or magenta dyes. There is a third kind of tints, the so-called neutrals, to which most people will be merely indifferent but among which the artistic eye will discriminate the most delicate *nuances*, classifying them as pleasing or the opposite. It would be interesting to obtain a full explanation of these different impressions from the point of view of physiological optics, but even on a superficial view we can understand in general how a pure, deep, saturated colour, such as the crimson of oriental silks, may excite those parts of the retina which are sensitive to red abundantly but without over-strain or any confusing bye- or counter-stimulus, and so result in pleasure; while other hues produce a languid stimulus, or else a conflict or confusion of stimuli, the effect of which will be similar to an unmusical sound or a discord in the case of the sense of hearing.

With colours, however, are very closely though not indissolubly associated the ideas of *coloured objects*, and in these cases the notion of the object comes in to mingle with our impression of the hue. Wundt considers that pure impressions of colour without any thought of objects are possible, for the hues of the spectrum which as colours are highly effective are 'generally very different from those of the natural objects to which accompanying feelings might refer.'[1] He admits nevertheless that 'the sensation green arouses almost unavoidably the idea of green vegetation, and since there are connected with this idea composite feelings whose character may be entirely independent of the affective tone of the colour itself, it is impossible to determine directly whether the feeling observed when a green impression is presented, is a pure affective tone, a feeling aroused by the attending idea, or a combination of both.'[2]

Hence a natural symbolism attaches to colour in the same way as to grades of light and shadow. This is illustrated in the popular distinction between 'warm' colours and 'cold.' The source of the distinction is probably to be found in associations formed in the remotest past of the race. The 'warm' colours, represented centrally by reddish-yellow, are connected with sunshine and the physical quickening of human life and unfolding of nature's products, and the association of ideas thus brought about modifies our direct impression of such colours without our being conscious of the process. We might suspect some inherent physiological virtue in the special colour red, attested by the effect of it upon certain animals and by the fact that their secondary marks of sex, as in the comb of the cock, are so often marked with it. It may very well however be that the exciting character of the colour among men is partially due to the fact that it is the colour of blood, just as green may through its suggestion of vegetation affect us with a sense of pleasantness and quiet. Red at any rate (partly perhaps through its commonness as a pigment) is the most popular of all colours in decoration among primitive peoples, and was used at a very remote period for the loving embellishment of the bones of departed kinsfolk.[1]

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 77.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 76.

§ 99. (B) and in Form.

Our quasi-direct impressions of form are more susceptible of analysis than those of single colours, for the former are gained not merely by the reception of an image on the retina but by the actual movement of the eyeball, which is an affair of muscular effort more or less measurable. We are not dealing here with the apprehension of *solid form*, that is form in all three dimensions at once, though there is a natural symbolism here that accounts for much in the artistic impression of architecture, and will be noticed in subsequent sections (§§ 101 f.). The formation of our impression of solid form is a complicated matter, and depends partly on binocular vision, or the seeing with two eyes at once, partly on our experience of the sense of touch, partly on that of bodily motion from place to place. The apprehension of form in two dimensions, that is of a surface with definite contours, is much simpler, but involves muscular movements of the eye as well as activity in the retina. This act of vision is well described in the following words:

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[1] Grosse, *die Anfänge der Kunst*, p. 58 f.

'In the process of seeing, the eye in continual movement passes over the whole object fixing it at every point, either following its contours or attracted by the varying impressions of light, which, vaguely apparent in different parts, are sufficient to attract the attention to themselves. At no point does the glance dwell, but it returns rapidly to every point passed, so that gradually there are formed more or less lively reminiscences of each part, out of which the resulting complete impression is put together. The facility of the eye in accomplishing these journeys is so great that the details of the process quite escape our consciousness.'[1]

Now it is held by some authorities that æsthetic pleasure and pain depend on the way in which these changes and movements are made, and the matter, according to Herbert Spencer, stands somewhat as follows. We have to take as our starting-point the familiar sense of gratification we experience when we exercise freely and to the full, but without straining it, any of our bodily powers. If the movement be natural and easy and not persisted in when fatigue has begun, this pleasure is its concomitant, but if on the contrary it be jerky, constrained, or too long continued, there results discomfort or pain. The case is exactly the same with those delicate and sensitive fibres that are connected with the organs of sight and hearing. The small muscles which move the eye in those rapid journeys over the objects of vision just described, have their own minute sentiments of satisfaction and discomfort, and manage to make these tell for much more than might have been expected in that wonderful laboratory of the brain, where, out of stimulus to nerves and chemical or mechanical changes, are fabricated those wholly different products we call pleasure and pain. In other words the act of apprehending the form of a surface with definite contours involves muscular movements of the organs of vision, and these come under the law that the exercise of bodily powers is under certain conditions pleasurable, under other conditions the reverse. As an æsthetic fact the curve is in itself undoubtedly more pleasing than the straight line, and this may depend on the physiological truth that, as the muscles of the eyeball are arranged, it requires a special effort involving some constraint to make the eye follow a straight line, while, as stated by Wundt, 'a line of gentle curvature is the line of movement most easy for the eye to traverse.'[1] So too the difference between a rich full curve and a poor one, though quantitatively very small, may be felt and estimated by the fastidious organs of vision.

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[1] Guido Hauck, *die Subjective Perspective*, etc., Stuttgart, 1879, p. 7.

The sensitiveness of the artistically trained eye to form is as great as it is to colour. There may be two forms, say two vases, that are of about the same size and shape but of which one is to this eye exquisitely beautiful, the other commonplace. So too there may be a collection of male portraits each in sable garb, and while the ordinary observer receives from all alike the single impression 'black,' the glance of the artist will detect qualitative differences that give some of these 'blacks' an artistic value out of all proportion to the rest. It seems hard to believe that the muscular movements round the eyeball, and the impressions in the optic nerve, are so different in these cases as to account for the varying artistic impressions, and it is not unnatural to find the idea of 'subjective complements of the sensations' invoked as possible explanations of the phenomena. The following is from this point of view instructive.

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[1] *Éléments de Psychologie Physiologique*, Paris, 1886, II. p. 208 (Translated from the German).

There is nothing about which experts in physiological optics are more sure than about the physical reason for certain familiar illusions of vision. One of these is our tendency to overestimate the height of a vertical line as against a horizontal. Wundt states that 'a vertical straight line is judged on the average one-sixth too long as compared with an equal horizontal line,'[1] so that most people in drawing a square by the eye will not make it high enough, and if they estimate the relative size of the sides of a true square will think it higher than it is broad. This is explained by the fact that the muscles of the eye act more easily laterally (that is in moving the eyeball along a horizontal line) than up and down. Hence when we measure by the eye a vertical line we are giving the muscles more trouble than when we measure a horizontal one of the same length, and in translating the muscular effort into terms of distance, according to the established normal relation, we arrive at results that are slightly inaccurate, and imagine the vertical line to be longer than the horizontal one. Recently however, an entirely different account of this same phenomenon has been offered in the *Æsthetic of Space* by Professor Lipps of Munich.[1] He suggests that verticality gives us the intellectual impression of an effort made to overcome gravity and to keep upright, and that this leads us unconsciously to magnify the dimension with which this sense of effort is connected. We sympathize, he says, with the column-shaft in its stiffening of itself to keep upright and fancy it taller than it really is.

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[1] *Outlines*, p. 123.

A consideration of the above will incline us to admit the possibility that this natural symbolism in forms accounts at any rate in part for the æsthetic impressions we receive from them. There is for example an ethical suggestion which belongs to the ideas 'up' and 'down' or 'lower' and 'higher,' and this lends a corresponding significance to the general disposition of architectural masses. An architectural style in which the main lines are parallel to the earth, as in Egyptian work and Greek, carries with it at once a different kind of ethical association from that attaching to a style in which, as in Gothic, the dominant lines are vertical and the masses terminate above in upward-striving slender spires and pinnacles. Association, moreover, plays its part in our appreciation of t rounded forms presented in sculpture or in certain productions of industrial art. In the case, for example, of the contour of a fine Grecian vase, there is, as we have seen, a certain physiological pleasure to be derived from its contemplation that is quite direct and independent of subsidiary ideas, but already when the eye, after tracing with satisfaction the enclosing line, has conveyed to the mind what becomes the impression of a rounded body, there have been called up associations connected with other rounded forms of which we have had past experience, such as those of the human frame, or even more specially of the nurturing bosom, and these modify the general impression. We may say, indeed, adopting words from Shelley's song, that

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[1] *Raumaesthetik*, Leipzig, 1897, pp. 7, 104.

> 'Nothing in the world is single;
> All things by a law divine
> In one another's being mingle.'

The latent affinities and associations which bind things together are to the poet the chief source of his thoughts, and verse never more perfectly fulfils its function than when it is making them understood with clearness and force. A function of the same kind belongs to the arts of form, and there is no reason why we should seek to eliminate from the sources of artistic expression all appeal to this natural symbolism, through which we are bound by innumerable links of interest and affection to the world around.

§ 100. Rejection of the Counter-Theory that Formal Beauty is the only true artistic quality.

The discussions in this chapter will, it is believed, justify the statement made at the outset, that *works of art delight us for two reasons, partly because they are beautiful, and partly because they are significant.* It is not denied here for a moment that there may be formal æsthetic pleasure without the existence, at any rate to our own consciousness, of any intellectual or moral element. Music often affords such pleasure and so do the arts of form; the mistake is to pretend that such formal pleasure is the only legitimate gratification to be derived from art—that we adopt an inartistic attitude when we recognize or look for in a work of art any elements appealing to thought or sentiment. Though at times we receive from such a work an impression of delight that seems as direct and simple as the taste of a sweet substance to the palate, yet in most cases the impression is of a complex kind, and depends upon the association of ideas or upon a process of reflection so rapid as to pass without our conscious participation. The word 'beautiful' may be taken to apply to those impressions of a formal kind that may fairly be described as immediate, while we use the term 'significant' for those that have a larger separable element of association and reflection. For this distinction no scientific precision is claimed. It is adopted as a practical measure in favour of that clearness which in a complicated discussion of this kind is not easy to secure.

§ 101. The Architectural Monument as a significant Work of Art.

In considering now the work of art in these two aspects, we will regard it first from the point of view of its *significance*. It will be convenient to separate the impression produced by the artistic unity in itself in its broadest and most general aspect, from that due to the Composition of the parts that make it up. It is in architecture that this distinction is most clearly apparent, for in architecture the monument as a whole possesses an artistic character quite independent of the relation of its parts. As a type therefore of the single, strong and immediate impression which can be conveyed by a work of art as a whole, let us take that of a vast and beautiful building, into the presence of which we are suddenly brought. The writer well remembers his first sight of the western façade of Rheims Cathedral. Arriving late, he had been driven to his hotel without any idea of its situation, and far on in the night, throwing back the Venetian shutters had gazed unsuspectingly forth across the moonlit street. There, in front, beyond the little *Place*, buttressed with gloom but bathed above in silver radiance, stood one of the most splendid monuments of medieval art. All about it was silent and motionless; the vision had burst unexpectedly upon the sight; it was a moment to test the strength and character of the main artistic impression immediately derived from such a work.

§ 102. The first essentials of Architectural Effect; Mass,

The reader who remembers similar experiences will agree that such an impression is primarily one of greatness, of mass. The eye is filled with an imposing presence; what we perceive is a structure vast beyond the measure of its surroundings, vast beyond the scale of the works of men, and akin rather to the colossal forms of the material universe. The particular shape and contour of the mass, its inner divisions, the relation of its parts, the light and shade and colour that chequer or play about its surface—these all escape us, and for the moment such inquiry into detail seems even trivial in face of the awe-inspiring height and breadth of the whole. This is then the first essential of architectural effect—that which Mr. Sedding once picturesquely described as the 'sheer weight and vigour of masses . . . employed as an attribute of expression,—the undivided weight of solid stone, colossal scale, broad sunshine, and unrelieved gloom.'

§ 103. and Stability.

'The first and most obvious element of architectural grandeur,' writes James Fergusson, 'is size—a large edifice being always more imposing than a small one,' and he adds soon afterwards, 'next to size the most important element is stability.' Magnitude and stability may be included together under the single term 'mass,' which we may accordingly take as the primary element of artistic effect in architecture.

Stability the writer last quoted explains as 'that excess of strength over mere mechanical requirement which is necessary thoroughly to satisfy the mind, and to give to the building a monumental character, with an appearance that it could resist the shocks of time or the violence of man for ages yet to come,'[1] and there is no doubt that the impression of immovable, rock-like strength mingles very readily with our apprehension of the greatness of an architectural monument, and combines with it to convey the æsthetic idea of Sublimity—an idea, it will be observed, that certainly does not come under the head of mere 'pleasure of the eye.'

§104. Architectural Sublimity involves the idea of Power, and of the Supremacy of Intelligence over Matter.

It must be noticed, moreover, that in the æsthetic effect of architecture the idea of *power* mingles in very many cases with that of mere magnitude and mass. A great building suggests in a moment severe and long-continued human toil, and, what is more, the supremacy of intelligence over matter. The Egyptian Pyramid is sublime, partly through its actual size and stability, but partly also through our consciousness of the prodigious labour without which it could not have been reared, and of the sovereign authority that could impose such toil and be obeyed. There are many architectural and engineering structures that may be justly called 'sublime,' in which it is not the mere mass and weight of material that is impressive, so much as the bold and skilful disposition of it. Such for example are the Forth Bridge and the Eiffel Tower. There might be a far greater actual mass of material in a structure, say, of the form of the Tay Bridge, but no grandeur, no sublimity, because no boldness. Such a simple affair, one feels, might be prolonged to any length—there was talk of a bridge twenty miles long over the marshy approaches to the Danube—it is a mere matter of so many tons of steel and so many companies of workmen. The former on the other hand are only possible through the concerted action of different constructive members towards a common end, reached only by a daring and sustained effort. This is undoubtedly an æsthetic impression—an impression of the sublime of power—and something of the same discernment of a triumph of skill over matter plays its part in our appreciation of an architectural monument like the Gothic cathedral. The height and the slenderness of the structure are not apprehended without a sense of the power of the builder over mechanical difficulties, which mingles with the simpler, more direct impression of elevation and extent. It must of course be understood that where boldness is carried too far and destroys the impression of stability, there is a contradiction which mars the æsthetic effect. This is perhaps the case in some Gothic structures, such as the marvellous choir of Beauvais.

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[1] *History of Architecture*, 2d ed. London, 1874, I. pp. 16, 17.

§ 105. The Significance of Architectural Styles.

What has now been said applies to all architectural monuments without any distinction of styles. The general attributes we have been considering belong to architecture as architecture, and not to special classes of buildings Greek or Gothic, sacred or profane. It has been already hinted that a 'natural symbolism' attaches to the different forms predominant in successive architectural styles—Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Romanesque, Gothic, Palladian and the rest, and also that the social and religious conditions under which these styles arose and were developed found expression in the general character of the buildings. This subject has however been treated so fully and so eloquently by Mr. Ruskin and many others, that it may be passed over here. Hegel in his *Æsthetic*[1] has some interesting remarks on old oriental, especially Egyptian, monuments, as expressive of the grand but vague conceptions through which the human spirit was in those epochs beginning to lift itself from the earth into the life of reason and order. Edward Freeman in his *History of Architecture* has an excellent chapter on the difference in general symbolic character between Greek and Gothic architecture.[2] Semper, in many passages of *der Stil*, shows a just appreciation—not always accorded by modern critics—of the princely dignity of fine Renaissance buildings. On Roman work the writer may be permitted to quote a sentence from an essay of his own on early Christian architecture. 'Rome strove to make a unity of the whole world of her possessions. She not only conquered and incorporated in her own body-politic the nations, but she united them by her bridges and roads which abolished natural barriers, and brought distant provinces into connection. Her mighty aqueducts which traverse the plains in monotonous succession of arches towards the walls of her cities; her amphitheatres, with their endless iteration of pillar and arch and their unbroken rings of seats—these are fit emblems of her irresistible course, her levelling, all-dominating policy, before which all limitations, all local varieties, were forced to disappear. . . . An interior like that of the Pantheon—with its simple divisions, its surfaces so sparingly broken, its immense dome brooding equally over all—conveys a sublime idea of unity, which is perfectly expressive of the character of the Romans.'[1]

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[1] On the 'Symbolic form of Art,' and on 'Symbolic Architecture.'

[2] London, 1849, book i. part ii. chap. iv.

It is obvious that considerations such as these must play their part in forming our general æsthetic idea of architecture, and it would have been an omission to ignore them in this place. They have perhaps been rather overworked in the past by writers who approach art from the literary side, and by a natural reaction technical critics are now disposed unduly to ignore them.

§ 106. The Æsthetics of Construction in general not entered upon.

It might be in place here to give some attention to the beauty, or at any rate interest, which attaches to any piece of clear construction, independent of all considerations of size or triumph over material difficulties. It is beyond question that the sight of an aptly designed piece of construction in building or in engineering, in which we discern the function of every part, and see that every part is performing its function, gives a certain kind of æsthetic pleasure. There is an analogy between the mechanical and the living organism. Look at certain animals built for swiftness and activity, such as the race-horse and greyhound, the antelope and creatures of the feline tribe. What grace there is in the spare lithe limbs, what an impression of power concentrated on direct single action in the bound or gallop or spring! Something like this we recognize in the beauty of certain machines that have movement, and even in that of certain immobile structures—a beauty that is dependent partly on the clearness of construction just noticed; partly on simplicity, in that there is no cumbering superfluity to obscure the working of the parts; partly on slenderness, in that each part must seem to be strenuously at work, screwed up always to the stretch like the limbs of a racer in fine training. Strictly speaking however, construction into which there enters no element of magnitude or power is excluded from consideration in this place, and would be more suitably treated in connection with the decorative arts, in whose operations the element of a due relation to structure is of the highest moment.

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[1] *From Schola to Cathedral*, Edinburgh, 1886, p. 142.

§107. Other effects produced by the Work of Art as significant; the Suggestion of Nature in Architectural Forms.

From the instances already considered, in which the artistic unity produces an æsthetic effect through its magnitude or the impression of power conveyed by it, we pass to those in which the effect is still indeed produced by the thing as a whole but with more conscious analysis of its special form and character. Under this heading fall all those considerations applicable to forms of art as representations of nature. If to resemble nature be in itself a merit in a work of art, it will be a merit independent of composition, and will come rather under the head of 'significance' than of 'beauty.' It is only in the arts of painting and sculpture that the imitation of nature plays any very prominent part. In architecture we may receive as it were a *reminder* of natural forms, sufficient to touch chords of association in our minds but not to invite us to definite comparison. The appeal which architectural masses make to our sense of the sublime is rendered more forcible because in a far-off way they recall to us those aspects of the material creation on which this sense has been nurtured (§ 102). The Romans thought that the Pantheon was so called because the vast dome of it suggested the vault of heaven the abode of all the gods,[1] and a similar comparison was made in the case of the dome of Sta. Sophia at Constantinople.[2] The effect of a great unbroken mass of masonry a hundred feet or more in height, like the wall of the Papal palace at Avignon, reproduces in our mind the impression of the mountain cliff, making up by its sheerness and isolation for its inferiority in measurable size.

[1] Dion Cassius, *Hist. Rom.*, liii. 27.

[2] Procopius, *De Ædificiis*, i. 1.

In such cases however there is only in the background of our minds an obscure recognition of likeness to nature, whereas in painting and sculpture the imitation is direct and obvious and is of the very essence of the arts.

§108. The Relation to Nature of the Works of Sculpture and Painting.

Speaking broadly there are three aspects of this relation. (1) The statue or the picture may be regarded merely as the presentation of nature, and in this case it may be really Nature, not Art, with which the spectator is concerned. (2) Each may be regarded merely as a beautiful thing in form or colour, with no reference at all to the subject of the representation. (3) Between these two opposing views there comes the third, which ignoring neither the subject of the work nor its outward appearance as form and colour, regards rather *the artistic treatment of the subject* which has won from nature the secret of beauty. That this latter view embodies the soundest appreciation of the arts will appear more clearly if we consider for a moment each of the two more narrow and limited theories above indicated.

§109. Statues and Pictures have been generally regarded from the point of view of their Truth to Nature,

From the very beginning of art history, so soon at least as the carver or painter had attained some success in the imitation of nature, the popular eye has looked at his work almost entirely as representing nature—that is, from the point of view of the subject. The people of our own country though less instructed in artistic matters than the publics of Athens, Florence or modern Paris, resemble in the main every other public, and look chiefly in art for something of immediate interest. That the public finds this to be the *subject*, the thing represented, is undoubtedly now the case, but it has also been the case all through art history. Both the plastic and the graphic arts have indeed generally been judged of almost exclusively from this point of view, and Pliny in the ancient, Vasari in the modern world, write about sculptors and painters as if their sole function had been the more or less lively imitation of natural scenes and personages. The poets have all along echoed the same notion, and the

> 'Better than I saw not who saw the truth'[1]

of Dante, Shakespeare's

> 'the cutter
> Was as another nature, dumb,'[2]

and Tennyson's

> 'Not less than truth designed,'[3]

are examples of the way in which every poet, unless, like Robert Browning, he has a special insight into artistic theory, will deal with the imitative arts.

§ 110. or of the Ethical Character of their Subjects.

If the ordinary outside observer find pictures interesting in proportion as they truthfully portray nature, others have gone farther and judged them according to the ethical character of the scenes and objects represented. As might have been expected, the Greek philosophers and moralists regard the arts almost entirely from this ethical standpoint. Aristotle remarks in the *Poetics* that a certain painter, Polygnotus, depicted men as better than they are, another, Pauson, as worse than they are, while a third, Dionysius, made them neither worse nor better than nature,[1] while in another work, following out the same line of thought, he says that young men should not be allowed to look at the pictures of Pauson, but only at those of Polygnotus or of any other painter whose works are morally elevated.[2] This view is carried to an extreme by the Socrates of Xenophon who in a conversation with the painter Parrhasius, reported in the *Memorabilia*,[3] demonstrates that the best painting is that which depicts the noblest scenes and personages. The use of painting for purposes of edification was not lost sight of by the medieval Churchmen who ordered didactic pictures for the walls of the sanctuary, and the same aspect of the art has been so often paraded in modern times that no further illustration of it is needed.

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[1] *Purgatorio*, xii. 68.

[2] *Cymbeline*, Act ii. sc. 4.

[3] *The Palace of Art*.

§ 111. Criticism of these Views.

It may be taken as needing no demonstration that every one now who has worked in art or received from artists some instruction as to the aims and conditions of their craft, will agree that beauty in works of art is of at least as much importance as truth. All such understand that a process of selection, omission, combination, must go on before the statue or picture is evolved. They know that nature is not always or altogether beautiful, and that an artist is not worthy of the name who in his choice is too easily satisfied. They know that what is selected as beautiful in nature must be made still more lovely by harmonious surroundings, that what is characteristic must be accentuated more clearly, what is not pleasing modified or left out. A beautiful result is indeed the paramount aim of the artist. Truth in itself may be a moral, but is not necessarily an artistic virtue. Unless nature be made obedient to the æsthetic purpose, unless beauty result from the imitation of nature, such imitation is vain. Skill in plastic or graphic delineation may of course be usefully employed in the representation of nature for other than artistic ends, and may, besides being useful, excite well-deserved admiration for its achievement; the resulting product need not however be a work of art. We have seen this to be the case in the very earliest times, when the life-like sketch of the mammoth, though the historical starting-point of the graphic art, is not to be reckoned in itself artistic (§ 13), and shall come upon the point again in the chapter on Sculpture, where the purely realistic statues of the deceased found in the oldest Egyptian tombs are in the same way excluded from the strictly artistic category. The mere imitation of nature, it is repeated, is not in itself artistic, and this will be accepted as true by all who have some practical acquaintance with the arts of painting and sculpture, though to the outsider there will still remain something fascinating about the former easy and logical theory.

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[1] ii. 1.

[2] *Politics*, v. 5, 21.

[3] Chap. x.

With regard to the ethical criterion, it need hardly be pointed out that this mode of regarding the subject is open to the criticism that it takes account rather of intellectual and moral qualities in the designer than of those more purely artistic. Such a one may indeed have selected a subject of the most elevated and edifying kind, and may have rendered it with much intelligence and force, while yet the result, as a work of art, is too execrable for words. Noble ideas tell immensely in art when expressed in artistic language, but they will not by themselves make a work of art. No artist can claim to be judged by his intellectual insight or his moral fervour, except in so far as he has the gift to make these effective in and through the artistic qualities of his work.

§ 112. The opposite theory of a Picture as 'Decorative' stated and discussed.

If therefore it be a mistake to regard works of sculpture and painting merely as representations of nature, it is equally out of the question to treat them merely as compositions of form, tone and colour. In the case of sculpture, the relation of which to nature differs, as will be seen (§ 153) from that of painting, such treatment would be palpably absurd, and sculpture may for the moment be put aside. In the case of painting the reduction of the work to a mere effect of tone and colour is more conceivable, and the question that is involved may have here a word.

It is the fashion in some quarters to use the word 'decorative' in a somewhat unreal sense in connection with the cabinet picture of modern times. A Corot landscape, we are told, is to be regarded as 'decorative,' and not as a representation of nature. If the word means simply 'pleasing to the eye,' then, of course, a Corot, like every other good picture, is 'decorative.' It is a thing of beauty, and to the imagination of its possessor it may seem to make all about it beautiful. As a fact however, the work is not meant to adorn its surroundings as a piece of decoration adorns them. It is an entirely independent work of art that may be moved from place to place, and for which proper surroundings have to be sought or devised. It is prior to its surroundings, not conditioned by them. For 'decorative' in this forced sense, the word 'beautiful' should be substituted.

In contemplating a picture, we may if we choose affect only to consider its beauties of tone and colour, and may even find pictures—by Monticelli perhaps, though certainly not by Corot—that do seem to fulfil these conditions of formal beauty and no others; it does not therefore follow that these are the only conditions of effect in the painter's art. This can never really be consistently maintained, as the following will show. The best statement of the pictorial program of the day, from the pen of a practical worker in art, is to be found in the little book by the famous Belgian painter Alfred Stevens, entitled *Impressions sur la Pein-*

ture, in which we find the creed of what he himself calls 'modernité' expressed in a series of terse and elegant aphorisms. Here are one or two characteristic utterances. 'In painting one can do without subject. A picture ought not to need an explanatory paragraph.' 'A painter ought before everything to be a painter, and the grandest and finest "subjects" in the world are not worth a good piece of painting.' 'At the Salon, the public is almost exclusively taken up with the "subject"; the true art of the painter becomes an accessory matter.'[1]

In somewhat similar terms, Mr. Whistler complains that 'the vast majority of English folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which it may be supposed to tell.'[2] Mr. Hole of the Royal Scottish Academy in a paper read some time ago at an Art Congress lays it down that 'the function of art is—to be beautiful. Not necessarily to picture things of beauty; not assuredly to set before us beautiful literary ideas. It seeks not to stimulate to lofty deeds, to teach or to preach anything. Its mission is to be in itself, and for itself alone, beautiful.'[3]

If these and similar statements are meant as correctives of the silly popular insistence on interest of subject as the only thing worth attending to in a picture, then they are both true and well-timed, but if they cover the belief that the be-all and end-all of a picture is to be materially pleasing to the eye, they can be met by counter statements from their own authors. For example, in the same series of aphorisms from which quotations have already been given, Alfred Stevens remarks of the French painter of the Napoleonic era, Géricault, whom he greatly admires, that with a single figure he tells the tale of all the army of the First Empire.[1] Here is a painter praised for his intellectual grasp of a theme of historical moment, for his power of creating a type and of delineating the general in the individual, for all in short that the old masters of design strove to accomplish and that moderns affect to contemn! Mr. Whistler, who explains lucidly how good pictures can be made up of pictorial elements without any insistence on subject or story, yet affirms that it is for the artist 'in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features,'[2] while Mr. Hole in the paper above quoted speaks of Art as the *interpretation of Nature.* Now to interpret nature, and to discern the man beneath the mask of the features, imply keen intellectual insight and sympathy. You cannot interpret nature till you can conceive nature, and this is just the work that man has been busy with from the beginning of rational civilization until now. He only can interpret nature whose intuition is quick to discern all that nature means for the men of his own time or for men at large. He must enter deeply into the spirit of his theme, and thereby in rendering it give it value and importance, just as the true portraitist enters into the character of his model and makes his work a reading of that character, and not mere outward delineation.

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[1] Nos. XV, LXVII, CLXV.

[2] *The Gentle Art*, p. 126.

[3] *Transactions of the National Association for the Advancement of Art*, Edinburgh, 1889, p. 72.

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[1] No. LXVIII.

[2] *The Gentle Art*, p. 128.

§ 113. The Artistic Treatment of Nature in the Art of Painting.

We may conclude, therefore, that it is not 'subject' merely that we look for in painting, nor is it merely 'artistic effect,' in the sense of pure beauty of form and colour, but, rather, a combination of these two, or to borrow a phrase already employed, '*the artistic treatment of the subject.*' Albrecht Dürer has an expression which is thus rendered in Sir Martin Conway's collection of his *Literary Remains*,—'Art standeth firmly fixed in Nature, and whoso can rend her forth thence, he only possesseth her.'[1] It would be impossible to express more tersely and with more truth the essential principle of the imitative arts. The phrase is a text upon which the whole history of these arts is a commentary. Ever since painting and sculpture became arts of expression dealing in independence with their themes, their exponents have been, consciously or unconsciously, struggling to accomplish what Dürer calls the 'rending forth' of Art from Nature. Nature to so many has remained closed and silent, and to so few has yielded up her intimate secret of beauty! Yet the artist does well to be unwearied in his importunity, for to win even a little is a priceless gain, and a piece of art that in any way reveals the hidden significance of nature's loveliness has gifted the world with a new and lasting delight.

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[1] Cambridge University Press, 1889, p. 182.

§ 114. The Language of Art.

The painter who can accomplish this has learned to use the '*language of Art*.' 'Art is a language,' exclaimed Jean François Millet, 'and language is made to express thought.' Now the artist can 'think' without a process of reasoning, and become eloquent without using any form of words. This is true of painting as of the other arts. Alfred Stevens says in one place: 'In the art of painting one must before everything be a painter: the thinker only comes in afterwards,' but in another: 'A true painter is a thinker all the time.' He protests that 'A sparkle of light thrown on an accessory by a Dutch or Flemish painter, is more than a skilful stroke of the brush, it is a touch of mind.'[1] Again, Eugène Fromentin—whose book upon the painting of the Low Countries is a classic expression of the best modern conclusions about the Art—while of course totally opposed to the popular heresy of looking at pictures for the literary interest of their subjects, yet insists on painting as a language for the expression of *artistic* thought. In a certain class of productions, he says, 'every work in which the hand reveals itself with joyousness and brilliancy is by that very fact a work that belongs to the brain and is drawn from it.'[2] Again he speaks of 'the dramatic value of a flourish and an effect,' and 'the moral beauty of a picturesque composition.'[1] In all such cases the 'thought' of the work is not merely a literary idea taking for the moment an artistic shape, but is on the other hand an idea formed and expressed from first to last in an artistic medium. It is something so intimately bound up with the expression that the two are really one, so that the artistic language may not only express thought, but actually *be* that thought. We should be able to say of it, Such thought could never be expressed in other than an artistic form. Though possessing an intellectual and a moral element, as created in the imagination of a thinking and feeling being, it does not appeal to the reflective reason nor does it attempt to edify. It is only in and through art that we can meet and apprehend it; if, or in so far as, we may be able to disengage the thought from the expression, it is not artistic thought and is not the proper content for the language of art.

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[1] *Impressions*, Nos. LXIII, CCV, CXXIX.

[2] *Les Maîtres d'Autrefois*, 6th ed. Paris, 1890, p. 72.

The 'language of Art' has many utterances. It will speak to us—

> 'In solemn tenour and deep organ tone'

from the Sublime of architecture; with the note of law and reason out of the well-knit ordered structure; in accents pregnant with associations that gather round country and shrine and tomb and with all the interest of history, from the national and religious monument. Through the significant types of sculpture and of ideal painting, it will bring before us the thoughts and aspirations about the Human and the Divine of some of the Master-minds of the ages. In portraiture, the language of Art will confide to us the secret of the hidden springs of character, and point out the marks which the soul has written on the face for only the discerning eye to read. In the human creature, and in all the organized beings and objects of nature, it will make clear to us—not the outward working only—but the heart from which all work proceeds, displaying structure and function and habit, till it becomes at once a record of what has been and a prophecy of the future. And finally from inanimate nature Art will learn the spell of her sympathetic power over the human spirit, and through the poetry of infinite spaces in Claude, through the mystery of light of Turner, and Rembrandt's mystery of darkness, through the solemnity of Ruysdael and the tranquil pensiveness of Corot, her language will come home to our hearts with an undertone of

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 92.

'The still, sad music of humanity'

heard through the larger harmony of the voices of the sky and field and mountain.

CHAPTER III

THE WORK OF ART AS BEAUTIFUL

§ 115. The Elements of Beauty; the Whole and the Parts

In the present chapter, the more purely formal side of the æsthetic effect of works of art will form the subject for consideration, but it must all along be remembered that the distinction between the *significant* quality and the more purely *beautiful* quality, is not an absolute one. Forms, colours, tones, though composed for an effect directly pleasing to the eye, carry with them as we have seen sundry associations, sundry hints of natural symbolism, which necessarily mingle with, and form part of, the total impression. It is possible, however, to discuss Composition without much reference to these ulterior considerations, and these last will accordingly in this chapter be kept in the background.

Composition involves the relation of the parts in an artistic unity to each other, and to the whole. If this relation be pleasing then the artistic unity is *beautiful*. As has been already explained, the formal discussion of the Beautiful from the point of view of æsthetic science forms no part of our theme. It may be noticed however here, that according to a common account of beauty the effect of it resides in the perception of diversity in unity and unity in diversity. This means that the beautiful object must present itself in such a form that we apprehend it as a single thing, embrace it as such in consciousness and find rest and satisfaction in its contemplation; while at the same time there is variety in its constitution, and the interest of subtly related elements. Our perception of the object as beautiful depends, therefore, partly on our apprehension of the unity of the whole, and partly on our attention to the arrangement of the parts. The variety of the parts would not satisfy us, unless they are held together in proper artistic relation, nor would the impression of singleness satisfy, if it were gained by mere emptiness and absence of marked internal features. We only find our full pleasure in the contemplation of the whole, when we apprehend some considerable complexity in the parts; only care to follow out the relations of the parts, when we feel that they are fused into a single grand impression.

§ 116. Importance of attending first to the Whole;

It must be carefully noted here that the apprehension of these two elements in the effect of the beautiful object, should be a single act. We should feel so to say, the parts in the whole, the whole in the parts. To consider the parts as separate things is to lose the artistic value of the work. Further, the greater the delight in the impression of the whole, the less will be the interest in the elements as separate things. The judgment of the artistically uneducated attaches itself to the parts, which they will investigate and analyse with tedious ingenuity. More advanced criticism will be satisfied with a general look of complexity and detail in the parts, but will estimate with curious fastidiousness the effect of the whole, demanding from it a nicely balanced harmony very rare of attainment. A little consideration will show that the appreciation of the general effect is an act of the more purely artistic judgment, while the analysis of the parts belongs rather to the reflective powers, which may be so actively employed that the artistic judgment is kept in abeyance and the effect of the work as a unity entirely lost. So, for example, the rendering of certain natural objects in a Turner drawing may be dwelt upon to the exclusion of any just appreciation of the whole work for its composition in line or light-and-shade, or its sympathetic rendering of nature in her larger aspects of infinity or repose. No better advice can be given to those who wish to become educated in art, than that they should begin by mistrusting all their own judgments when directed towards *the parts* of an artistic unity, and attempt for a while merely to get the utmost satisfaction attainable from the general effect of the whole. When this is properly judged, it will be time to go on with the analysis of the parts.

§ 117. in criticizing Architecture,

In the case for example of architecture, they should study a monument as a whole, first valuing aright the general impression of its mass, and then estimating the effect of composition, gained by the breaking up of the mass into parts related according to a just sense of proportion. They should not trouble themselves about the details of the figure-sculpture, or such other unessential portions, but look on these merely as elements in the general effect and judge them solely in this relation. By so doing it is possible to become a critic of architecture. The opposite process would be to consider first the details, say, the figure-sculpture, asking what the various statues and reliefs represent, and admiring the naturalistic treatment of action and drapery, while the building itself is looked upon as in the main a framework or a show-box to set off these interesting items. If the study of architecture be commenced and carried on in this trivial fashion, which is much too common among travellers, it will be impossible to arrive at any true comprehension of the art.

§ 118. Sculpture,

What is true of architecture is also true of sculpture, and here it is perhaps more easily recognized. A Greek statue at any rate—the typical achievement of the plastic art—repels the familiar approach of the sentimental inquirer into small details, and demands to be taken as a whole or not at all. The forms of limb and drapery are moulded into such a perfect unity that we can hardly conceive of them as separate parts, which could have had a different relative position. The harmony is so absolute, we cannot dream of discord. Such pieces challenge the artistic judgment, and make but little appeal to that form of criticism which treats works of art in the main as story-books. Hence Greek statues are sometimes reproved for want of interest and expression, when the fault really lies in the objector's choice of his point of view. Whatever a Greek plastic work has to say will be read best in its general aspect, and this viewed not once only, but often, and from every side, will reveal a depth of artistic meaning unsuspected by the ordinary observer.

§ 119. and Painting.

In the case of the picture, the temptation to consider the parts in themselves, rather than the effect of the parts in their relation to the whole, is to most people irresistible, and upon this popular weakness subsist the promoters of exhibitions of painting. It cannot be too strongly impressed on the student of art that a picture is good or bad in itself as a whole, irrespective of the special elements which make it up. There may be many classes or degrees of value among good pictures, and in fixing these there are various considerations to be taken into account, but 'good' and 'bad' are pretty absolute categories, and pictures are classed thereunder mainly in virtue of two qualities which belong to works of art in general but are specially marked in painting. These qualities may be described as *harmony* and *strength of effect*. 'Harmony' is the element of unity, 'strength' belongs rather to the parts. When these qualities exist together in due balance then the picture is a good one, but neither the one nor the other will do alone. Harmony is an excellence cheaply won when the elements to be arranged in accord have no decided character; it has then hardly more than a negative value. Strength on the other hand (whether residing in decision of drawing, in light-and-shade, or in colour), if it be allowed to escape the control of harmony may be obtrusively displeasing, as in the normal 'Salon' picture, and is by itself not even a negative excellence. Harmony is less easy to judge than strength, and the eye needs before all things to be trained to a nice discrimination of this all-important pictorial quality. Only the habit of looking first at a picture as a whole, without troubling to inquire into its elements, will supply the needful education, and turn the ordinary Royal Academy visitor into an appreciative critic of this most versatile and difficult of the arts.

§ 120. 'Breadth' and its artistic significance.

The artistic term 'breadth,' so commonly used in the criticism of the arts of form, may claim a word of comment here. It is said of a façade, a sculptured frieze, a picture, that it is 'broadly treated' or has 'breadth' when the parts are in uch due subordination that the single harmonious ffect is predominant. Thus the interior of Mr. Bentley's new Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster, and the Eastern or entrance façade of the University at Edinburgh, a masterpiece by Robert Adam, have breadth in virtue of their massive simplicity, the largeness of the parts which make them up, and the severe restraint of the ornamentation. The same quality belongs to the Elgin Frieze because the constituent elements in the procession are few and simple, the lines of the heads of the riders and of the figures on foot are kept on much the same level, the dress and accoutrements of the figures admit of only enough variety to avoid monotony or emptiness, the relief is low and the surface offers but slight contrasts of light-and-shade. Claude of Lorraine's landscapes are pre-eminently broad, for the objects he depicts are in themselves uninteresting and appear time after time on his canvases without much variation, while on the other hand his apprehension of the charm of vast open spaces of earth and sky, bathed in atmosphere, is singularly intense and poetical.

It is a tribute to the value of this quality of breadth in painting, to find the modern school of landscapists working as a rule in a low key both of tone and colour. The fashionable 'greys' in landscape and the low tone to which everything is 'kept down' are really devices to secure breadth of effect. Decided contrasts of colour and brilliant lights are avoided, because they disturb the harmony of the whole scheme, and destroy the restfulness of a composition of which all the parts are much on the same level. The modern artist's appreciation of this quality has been well expressed by a representative of a prominent school of young British painters.[1] 'We know how,' remarks this artist, 'as we ramble through a wood and come out on some still pool, the trees and grasses reflected in it seem to us to have a new and added loveliness as seen therein,' and he quotes Shelley's lines in 'The Recollection' about the pools

> 'In which the lovely forests grew,
> As in the upper air,
> More perfect both in shape and hue
> Than any spreading there.'

'Fancy,' he continues, 'how lifeless and how painfully hard would be the presentment could we conceive a huge plate-glass mirror lying there instead, and we can realise how much more beautiful is the tremulous pool of water.' The observation is a just one, but the artistic charm of the reflection does not depend on the surface being tremulous, but rather on the fact that, besides *framing* the objects, the pool reflects them with a slightly diminished brilliancy of light and a consequent lowering of tone as compared with nature. The result is increased breadth of effect, and a harmony of light-and-shade that is eminently pictorial.

A conspicuous illustration of what is meant by breadth in painting, is furnished by a comparison of the portraits by Reynolds, Gainsborough and their school with those by representative living British portraitists. The Reynolds-Gainsborough style was based essentially on a tradition drawn from Vandyke, and was pictorial first, and realistic only in a very secondary sense. Every portrait, that is to say, was studied as a picture in a rich but quiet harmony of colour, and was before everything beautiful as a work of art. Detail, either of features or dress, was not insisted on; the features were shown under an even light without strong shadows, and the effort was rather to generalize than to accentuate characteristic points; in the dress, the matter-of-fact forms of the modiste were often transformed into draperies as ideal as those of the Greek sculptor. In a word, while the artist recognized the claims of the facts before him to adequate portrayal, he endeavoured to fuse all the elements of the piece into one lovely artistic unity, and in so doing secured in his work the predominant quality of breadth. This broad style, maintained also by Raeburn and Romney, was handed on to painters of less power, and died out in the first half of last century in attenuated productions in which harmony became emptiness. To this has succeeded the modern style of portraiture, the dominant notes of which are truth and force. While the older school was seen at its best when dealing with the softer forms of the female sex and of youth, the moderns excel in the delineation of character in strongly-marked male heads, and some of them can hardly succeed with a woman's portrait. They individualize and accent, as much as the older men broadened and made beautiful. The fine appreciation of character in portraiture shown by Sir John Watson Gordon about the middle of last century marks the beginning of the forcible style now so favoured—a style suited to an age of keen intellectual activity, of science and of matter-of-fact. There is more of nature, and hence to the uninitiated more of interest, in the portraits of this school, but less breadth, less harmony, less pictorial charm, than in those on the older tradition. The former may be best for the biographical ends of a national or family portrait-gallery, but the latter are best to live with—and after all is not this the soundest criterion of artistic excellence?

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[1] A. Roche in *Transactions*, etc., Edinburgh Congress, 1889, p. 336 f.

§ 121. The value of 'Play of Surface' as against Decision of Form in the Arts.

There is one other consideration of a general kind which may be fittingly introduced in this connection. When dealing with the artistic impression of a work of architecture, sculpture or painting, or of a piece of ornamentation, the modern connoisseur takes as a rule especial delight in any irregularity and 'play' of effect, produced partly by surface texture, and partly by an absence of definite circumscribing lines, and the consequent melting of one part of a composition into another, the demarcation being felt rather than seen. Regular and decided forms, as in carved ornament, are now voted 'hard'; clearness and finish in marble-cutting are not admired beside a sensitively varied surface, where delicate lights and shades flicker across the form. 'Brush-work,'—or the actual texture of paint applied by trokes in this or that direction, or with this or hat amount of pigment,—is greatly in demand as an element in pictorial effect. The 'mark of the tool' is exacted on all objects of industrial art. Even the stone-mason is to be pressed into the service of the new connoisseurship, and an authority on art matters has even maintained that architectural mouldings should not run on a level line but be somewhat 'wavy' and free! What is the value in art, we are obliged to ask, of this surface-play, this irregularity and suggestiveness? Is it really as potent a factor in our artistic enjoyment as these modern critics appear to believe?

It is doubtless a just artistic instinct that revolts from over-rigid formality, and that craves in art for some element of suggestion, some stimulus to the imagination. It is easy however to suffer this feeling to run too far, and such extreme statements as the one just quoted inevitably provoke criticism. We may for example appeal at once to the practice of the Greeks. In Greek plastic work there is very little dependence on these accidental qualities of texture. The form is perfectly clear and distinct, the surface brought up to a very high degree of smoothness, though not polished. Thus, on the Parthenon fragments—as, for example, the further side of the head of the horse of Selene, or the parts about the navel of the Ilyssus—wherever the marble is not corroded by time, we see that it was finished with the chisel in detailed portions, such as the left eyeball of the horse's head, while on broader surfaces it may have been smoothed with sand or pumice. There is no sign of any desire to leave 'texture' on the stone, and the surface though exquisitely sensitive is firm and clearly defined. The habit of actually polishing the surface of marble was introduced in the latest age of classical art, and may be illustrated from many Roman Imperial portraits. The well-known figure of the Dying Gladiator in the Capitoline Museum at Rome is polished, but this may be due to an endeavour to imitate the surface of a bronze original. In bronze, where effect is bold and strong, the glitter is not prejudicial, but in marble it is objectionable because of the reflections which destroy all breadth as well as all delicacy of tone-effect on which a good deal of the beauty of the white softly-modelled figure depends. Hence the fine finish of the best Greek statues stopped short of any polishing process.

Again, the masonry of the great temples was so exquisite in its precision that a cella-wall, of squared and carefully fitted blocks, would have appeared like a single slab of marble. To secure evenness in the lines of the flutings of the columns, these were not cut till the successive drums were fixed in their places and the shaft complete. A Greek stone-cutter would have been scandalized at the idea of running his mouldings in 'wavy lines' or varying by a hair's breadth for artistic reasons the given profile. It is true that the masonry of the Parthenon is not mathematically correct in the matter of the dimensions of the parts. Sizes of similar details differ a little throughout the edifice, but these variations (when they are not conditioned by optical reasons) are due, as Professor Durm has shown, rather to the inevitable imperfection of all human work, than to any predisposition against rigid accuracy.[1] The aim of the Greek craftsman was always definite perfection of form, and when this was obtained there was no care to conceal it beneath a mantle of surface-effect or to cast over it the glamour of texture. No one however on these grounds accuses Greek work of rigidity and hardness, and denies it the true artistic charm.

But, it may be asked, how far do these canons of Hellenic work apply, let us say, to the French decoration of the Louis Quatorze or Louis Seize periods, or to the products of modern industrial art now condemned for their artistic sterility? The answer is not difficult. The Greeks could afford to aim at distinctness and decision when their forms were thoroughly well thought out and elaborated under the guidance of the finest artistic tact, while on the other hand the debased forms of modern industrial art products (and to a less degree the soulless though accomplished carved and moulded work of the French decorators of Versailles and Fontainebleau) can make no claim to stand out in this independent fashion. The lifeless accuracy of machine-made or finished 'goods,' and even the netteté of French work (unless when we have it at its very best) is quite a different thing from the *living* accuracy of the Greek, where everything is what it is down to the minutest detail for good and sufficient artistic reasons.

The fact is that there are two kinds or types of artistic work each excellent in its way, the differing characteristics of which should be kept apart in the mind. (1) There is the clear-cut art of the Greeks, perfect in form, where we obtain decision without hardness, and can indulge in the most narrow inspection of details without finding any want of sensitiveness in the surface-treatment; but (2) there is another sort of work altogether, best represented in medieval artistic products, in which there is no great elaboration or refinement of form, but at the same time a general artistic charm of the most delightful and sympathetic kind. When Mr. Prior, who has written so well about our English Gothic art,[1] spoke once of the 'beautiful harmonies of Texture, which the architects of old had composed with the common materials of their buildings, the rough burnt brick, the rough burnt tile, the hand-shaped timber, and the hand-cast plaster, thatch and tarred boarding, lead lattice, and bubbled glass, traceries of wrought iron, incrustations of moulded lead,' he was referring to the work of the Romanesque and Gothic periods, and to what may be called domestic, as opposed to monumental, building and decoration from the middle ages to nearly our own time. It is this style of work that the modern connoisseur has in view when he praises irregularity and play. It is here that we find the magic of suggestion, the variety, the light-and-shade, that build up for us a vague but pleasing artistic impression, and we may gain the full value from this class of effects, without depreciating work which has other and perhaps far higher claims.

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[1] *Die Baukunst der Griechen*, Darmstadt, 1881, p. 108 ff.

We may now sum up the foregoing.

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[1] *Gothic Art in England*, London, 1899.

(1) In order to receive the impression of formal beauty in a work of art we must take in at once the whole and the parts, attending primarily to the general effect, and realizing the parts in and through their relation to that effect.

(2) This formal beauty may reside in the relation of definite clear-cut forms, or it may depend rather upon the play of a varied surface, and on the melting of one form into another when decision gives place to suggestiveness.

§ 122. The Conditions of Formal Beauty in the Arts.

The conditions of formal beauty in Composition may be reduced to three—Clearness of arrangement, Repetition or Regularity, and Contrast or Variety. There must be clearness of arrangement that the eye may be able to find its way among the elements of the composition; enough similarity among these for the eye to be able to rest and feel at home, enough variety to prevent its becoming fatigued and indifferent. The physiology of the matter is evident. In a composition, say, of a picture, or of the façade of a building, if there is a medley of lines all running in different directions, the eye in following them is distracted and worried; it seeks to find a way through the maze, but is continually balked and turned aside. The same is the case if the lines all seem to lead away out of the composition in different directions; the eye then parts from the work and has each time to be brought back to it from the outside. Dissatisfaction results naturally from the jarring and irregular muscular movements thus caused, whereas if the lines are arranged in ordered groups, with *a way through them*, and with a certain repetition of forms, the eye feels at ease, and takes pleasure in following the well-marked or remembered tracks. This is just the physiological side of the artistic principles we have already dealt with in other connections. That a work of art should be a unity, that harmony should be studied in the relations of the parts, are principles which have a physiological as well as a rational basis.

On the other hand, if the eye be asked to do the same thing too often—to follow the same track over and over again—the result is boredom, and dissatisfaction of another kind. Unless there be sufficient change of direction in the lines concerned, or sufficient Contrast, the same result follows as in the case of the prolonged exercise of any single power. The organs of vision demand the relief of change, though they fret at mere aimless zigzagging. The matter will be simplified if we note the differing characteristics of a few familiar figures of a simple kind, in relation to the above three conditions of formal beauty.

§ 123. Beauty in simple Figures.

(1) Generally speaking, figures bounded by curves are more pleasing than those made up of straight lines. The eye is more disposed to follow a curve and the latter has also the element of Variety, while on the other hand the rectilinear form has the advantage in Clearness and in Regularity.

(2) The square and the circle are the simplest

figures of the two kinds. They possess Clearness and Regularity but the element of Contrast is but slight.

(3) Figures that are nearly but not quite square or circular offend because they are not Clear. The eye does not know how to take them, Regularity and Contrast are at odds in them.

(4) The most pleasing figures of both kinds are those which have a pronounced element of Contrast while the unity of effect is still preserved.

In the case of curved figures, if the circle is too regular, the oval with circular ends offends through its want of clearness—it is a circle yet at the same time not a circle. On the other hand the ellipse unites some of the most important æsthetic qualities of form. It is Clear, because its bounding line changes its direction according to a law of its own quite distinct from the law governing the sweep of the circle; it has Variety, and at the same time the symmetry of the design keeps it studiously uniform. One further step in the direction of emphasising the element of Variety is taken when the elliptical figure is turned to that of an egg, another when it becomes pear-shaped. These forms differ in that the ellipse is so far symmetrical that it can be cut by the two diameters into four equal sections, the egg falls into two equal sections on each side of the long axis, while in the pear-shape there is no exact repetition of the parts. In itself the egg-form may be pronounced on the whole to be the best, and it will be observed that this is the generating form of most of the beautiful Greek vases.

Similarly in the case of rectilinear figures. The rectangle in all its modifications has the advantage in Regularity over all rhomboidal and even polygonal forms, and is so largely the predominant figure in architectural compositions that it is all we need take account of here. Among rectangular figures the square holds the same relative position as the circle among curved—it is too Regular for the highest beauty, while a parallelogram that is nearly but not quite a square offends against the canon of Clearness. It has often been asked whether or not there is a perfect rectangle, one in which the relation between the short side and the long is absolutely satisfying, so that we feel anything added or taken away from length or breadth would detract from the harmonious proportions of the whole. The German writer Zeising adduced for this purpose the so-called 'golden section' found in the following way. 'Divide a line,' he said, 'at such a point that the smaller part bears to the larger the same relation that the larger bears to the whole. Take the larger and the smaller for the two sides of the rectangle, and an ideally perfect proportion is secured.' The relation thus constituted cannot be numerically represented, but the proportions 5 : 8 or 8 : 13 are approximate, and it will certainly be found that a rectangle of which the sides bear this proportion is pleasing to the eye. The difference between length and breadth is marked enough and yet not too pronounced. There is Contrast, while the general harmony of effect is still unbroken.

§ 124. Such Beauty is not an absolute quality.

It may be remarked on this, that as explained in the abstract in §§ 98 f., in a matter of this kind there can be no absolute best, because the æsthetic judgment can rarely, if ever, be sufficiently disinterested to decide on grounds of purely formal satisfaction. Other considerations are bound to make themselves felt as a disturbing influence. A rectangle or a curved figure in architecture or sculpture or painting is not a mere form, but it has some special use or function, or represents something in nature. These external relations are continually moulding the forms used by the artist, and make them other than they would be if created to supply mere physiological pleasure to the organs of vision. Thus it may be perfectly true that a rectangle of about 5 to 8 is a pleasing form and will for that reason make its appearance in architectural compositions, as defining the whole mass or its main divisions or detailed portions such as window-openings. Yet we must remember that there are many considerations besides abstract beauty that go to determine architectural forms. A form may be extended in one direction beyond the limits of pure beauty in order to increase its significance, as in the case of the upward elongation of the proportions in Gothic. The square form for an elevation would be rejected on purely æsthetic grounds, but Mr. Ruskin especially praises the 'mighty square' of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence for its look of concentrated power.[1]

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[1] *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 2d ed., Lond. 1855, p. 70.

Again in all construction, though the curved form may be more beautiful in itself than the straight, yet when the idea of *support* has to be conveyed, the rigidity of the latter makes it far preferable. Hence the straight legs of Louis Seize couches are to be preferred to the cabriole legs of the Louis Quinze period when curves were everywhere. In the human figure the strength of the male is expressed by lines approaching nearer to the straight than those which bound the softer and more swelling forms of the woman. The sculptor will continually sacrifice pure beauty in these respects to expression, though when judging simply by the eye he will recognize a difference of abstract beauty in simple curved figures.

§ 125. Formal Beauty of Composition, in Architecture;

The same principles that apply to beauty in simple forms obtain also in the higher walks of Composition. This pure pleasure of the eye is provided for by the architect, when he marshals his grand masses and plans out his smaller subdivisions; by the sculptor, when he secures a 'flow of line' throughout his group; by the painter, when he distributes his tones and colours, and sketches in his forms. There is always involved a balance of the same qualities just noticed. The forms of architecture, depending mainly as they do on construction, are clear and decided, and necessarily involve a large amount of Repetition. The rectangular mass of the whole monument is broken into smaller rectangular masses, and these are subdivided by horizontal and vertical features and pierced by rectangular openings. Repetition is secured by the symmetrical arrangement of these divisions on each side of a centre. Contrast by the introduction of oblique or curved forms, especially in some predominant feature such as the dome or spire.

The value of a unifying element in architectural design, and the importance of Repetition in emphasising form or direction, are illustrated by the development of Mouldings. Though the parts of an architectural composition are necessarily bound together in a certain statical relation, yet the connection may in complicated structures become so loose to the eye that a binding link seems imperatively required. This is supplied by the long sweep of the moulding which follows an even flight along the mass, turning the flank of projections, penetrating hollows, and reappearing on the same level at the most distant point of the elevation. Such a feature appears as a Line, and the value of lines so used in bringing a composition into harmony cannot be over-estimated. Again, whether these mouldings extend in a horizontal or vertical course along or up and down a rectangular mass, or else follow the curve of an arch, they always tend to a multiplication of lines in the given direction. Thus the outline of the Gothic arch, in itself a pleasing curved form, is emphasised by being repeated over and over again by the lines of light-and-shade in the richly profiled moulding, and the same applies to moulded bases both Greek and Gothic. The reduplication of the lines does not weary the eye. The alternation of light and shade due to the alternate projection and recess of the moulding gives Variety, and the Repetition in direction serves to secure the essential element of repose.

On the whole, the forms used by the architect are surprisingly simple, and would indeed be ineffective were it not for the grand quality secured to the architectural monument by its inherent mass. The powerful æsthetic effect of this is really aided by the regularity and simplicity of the elements of the composition. Forms in themselves more varied and pleasing might not combine so well into the unity of the single grand impression of the Sublime. Hence the contentment of the architect with the straight line and the arc of the circle, which as we have seen (§ 78) in nearly every case are the bounding lines of his more conspicuous forms. Part indeed of the dignity of the architectural monument is due to the noble simplicity of its contours.

§ 126. and Sculpture;

When we pass from architecture to sculpture, we have to deal with an art which, though dependent to some extent on grandeur of aspect, cannot be in this respect a rival of the architectural monument, and makes up for the deficiency by greater complexity and beauty in the parts. The curves of the statue or group are exquisitely varied, and we may find that different forms of the egg-shape, with its contrast of fuller and sharper curves, on the whole prevail. If we examine from this point of view the classical figure of the Venus de'

Medici (with the arms removed), which has great formal beauty though little elevation of type, we shall see how much depends on such contrast between rounded thigh and delicate knee, between the spacious, broadly-treated shoulders and the more rapid fall and rise of the sacral depression and the gluteus. Or turn from this to the Theseus (see Frontispiece) where the curves are stark and strong, yet contrasted on the same principle of giving stimulus to the eye without fatiguing it with too much variety. One favourite device of the Greek sculptors to secure this end was to oppose in juxtaposition massively rounded forms, as of the nude, with richly detailed passages, as in the crisp drapery with its innumerable folds. The eye takes delight in exploring the complexities of the latter, but soon turns for change to the simpler masses, which appear nobly restful in contrast. The reposeful effect of the nude awakes in turn a desire for more active exercise, which is provided by the mazy convolutions of the folded garment.

As in architecture so here. Any tendency of the forms to appear too broken and separate is counteracted by the creation of certain dominant lines, which secure Clearness by guiding the eye through the composition, and embrace in a single sweep the boundaries of many of the masses in combination. The well-known Discobolus of Myron (Plate V) is a capital example of such a use of line. The eye follows the contours in a single sweep, from the hand with the discus along the right arm across the shoulders and down the left arm, whence it passes along the left leg to the foot. Here is one large line dominating the whole composition and giving the repose and unity required by art, while there is the needful opposition supplied by the strong zigzag of the bowed torso and the bent right leg, which brings the whole again into full vitality and vigour.

§ 127. and Painting.

The art of painting, save when it is only reproducing the impressions given by architecture and sculpture, relies less than the plastic art upon beauty of form. We have already seen that the most artistic painting is that in which form is understood rather than emphasised, and which gives a general impression of tone and colour. At the same time, though the picture does not consist of figures definitely circumscribed, yet the elements of the composition have amongst them certain relations of form, on which depends the broad general effect of the piece. It is true that there is a harmony in colouring that is independent of the shape or size of the tinted spaces, just as a tone-study may be effective through mere contrast of light and darkness. Yet in practice we speak continually of the 'masses' of light and shadow, or of a 'sweep of colour,' through a picture, and the skilful disposition of these elements, *as forms*, is a great part of the mystery of pictorial composition. Such composition will necessarily have less formal regularity, because less decision in the shapes, than is the case either in architecture or in sculpture, but it is none the less amenable to the same laws,

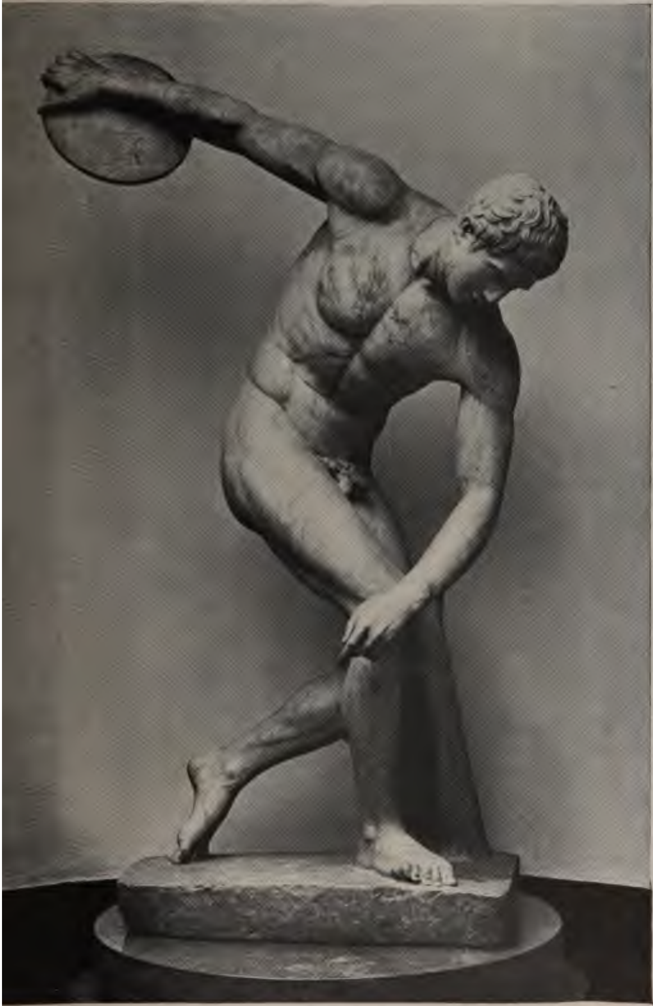

Plate V. To face p. 252.
Discobolus of Myron. British Museum.

and its success will depend equally on Clearness, Regularity and Contrast.

§ 128. How far is Pictorial Composition amenable to formal Laws?

Pictorial composition is so varied in its possibilities that it is sometimes forgotten how severe an element of restraint is provided by the frame or mural-setting. The field of composition is always precisely bounded, and though in mural work it may conform to various geometrical figures, in the case of the modern cabinet picture it is nearly always a rectangle. The first duty of the composition is to fill this set space with a pleasing combination of forms, or passages of tone and colour, arranged on the principles here under discussion, and these must have relation to the whole space as well as to each other. Rules which have now a somewhat antiquated sound used to be formulated for pictorial composition, as it was understood in the great Italian schools of figure-painting in the sixteenth century. 'Let your chief mass or group,' it was said, 'be of a pyramidal form'; 'divide your objects or figures into two masses or groups, one the chief mass or group of the picture, the other much smaller but of a well-calculated relation to it'; 'keep your principal object, your highest light, or your most intense colour well towards the middle of your field, though of course not rigidly in the centre of it.' These and similar precepts are now out of date, and the independence and experimental character of modern painting brook ill the restraint of formulæ; yet the painter is none the less observing all the time certain unwritten laws, based on essentially the same principles as the old. A generation ago, should an artistic formula issue clothed with authority from the atelier of a Delaroche, the Courbets of the day would (figuratively) tear it to shreds by painting better pictures in exactly the opposite way; nowadays if a Reynolds of St. John's Wood were to lay down any principle of treatment, a Gainsborough from Holland Park would practically controvert it in the next Academy, while it is possible that a satirical voice from another artistic quarter might pipe an incisive epigram on the theories and practice of both. But the truth remains all the time the same, that the practice of painting, like that of every other art, is not a mere matter of individual caprice, but must conform to general principles of artistic treatment.

Even Constable, an Independent and a Naturalist in a conventional age, recognized this. To a young painter who had been boasting that he studied no man's works but only nature, he remarked once, 'Well, but after all, *there is such a thing as the Art*.' It is impossible in any form of artistic practice to ignore '*the Art*,' and the elements of a good picture are in a sense just as artificially put together by the modern Impressionist, as they were in old time by the pupils of a Raphael or a Le Brun. The difference is that the art is more cunningly concealed, and to the uninitiated the effect is made to look spontaneous. It is not really spontaneous, for the *good* impressionist picture is the result of very careful study and of experiments in arrangement, the extent of which is a studio-secret hidden from the admirer of the completed result as 'something so fresh and natural.' 'The Art'—of making up a good picture—is just the judicious balancing of those opposite qualities so often spoken of in the preceding pages as Unity and Diversity, Harmony and Strength of effect, Repetition and Contrast—for these are only different ways of putting the same idea. Yonder dab of light, in the middle-distance of that impressionist landscape, is introduced to save the harmony of tender greys from flatness and lack of interest. It was put in too light at first, and drew the attention unduly to that particular part of the picture, and it has been 'out' half-a-dozen times before its exact relation as light to the rest of the tone-composition was determined. Then it was originally placed a trifle further to the right hand, and was found to be too directly under the point in the grey sky where the light is struggling through the clouds. Now we see, in the finished piece, that it lies on the line of a pleasant curve with this point and the light on the heap of stones in the foreground, and brings these two into a connection which makes for the general harmony. The position and the intensity of this patch of light is just as much the concern of the art of composition as the massing of the parts of a Gothic façade, or the drawing together of the lower limbs of the Theseus so as to round off the effect of the whole figure. Here again, as in sculpture, will be found the value of

Line, the magic potency of which will avail to bind the scattered elements that straggle about within the frame into an organic unity, whereon the eye will dwell contented as upon a work not of nature or of chance, but of the order-giving imagination of a rational man.

PART III

THE ARTS OF FORM

CHAPTER I

ARCHITECTURAL BEAUTY IN RELATION TO CONSTRUCTION

§ 129. The Elements of Architectural Effect: Summary of Earlier Sections

It will be convenient at the outset of this chapter to recall the architectural principles that have been discussed in previous sections. Architecture has been presented (§ 17) as an art dependent to a substantial extent on utilitarian considerations, but at the same time from the first an art of expression, that has its birth in the festal structure, not the mere structure for use. It is distinctively an art of Form (§ 80); effects of Colour, though they may add æsthetic charm, are not of its essence, and are most suitably introduced as a compensation when the material of the fabric is in itself of an inferior kind and is in need of clothing. The primary and most powerful means of expression in architecture is by imposing Mass (§ 102) which conveys the æsthetic impression of the Sublime, but architecture is expressive in more articulate fashion when through the special features which constitute the historical Styles (§ 105) its forms become eloquent of the ideas of successive ages. Architectural Beauty, as distinct from the Sublimity of Mass, is due to Composition (§ 125), that is to the breaking up of the whole into subsidiary portions related to each other and to the mass on some pleasing scheme of proportion. Finally, an aid to Composition of essential value is furnished by sundry minor features such as Mouldings (§ 125), which are used to accentuate certain forms or to combine part with part by connecting lines.

In accordance with the foregoing, the characteristics to be desired in the architectural monument may be thus formulated.

I. The building must have its spaces so disposed that the various purposes for which it was erected are completely and conveniently fulfilled.

II. It should be solidly constructed of materials suitably chosen, and employed in a manner correspondent to the character of each.

III. It ought to possess two, or at any rate one of two, æsthetic qualities, (1) Sublimity, if its dimensions and character permit, and (2) Beauty in composition of masses, tones and lines.

IV. It should not only be æsthetically pleasing but significant, and this in two respects, (1) as expressing in its outward aspect the nature of its construction, (2) as proclaiming and exalting the functions, civil, national or religious, it is designed to serve.

It is obvious that these various characteristics of the ideal architectural monument fall into two groups. Some are prescribed by considerations of utility or tectonics,[1] and others by considerations of art, and it is a question whether utility or structural consistency and art will always be found to demand the same thing. It must not be supposed that the useful and the beautiful are in their nature antithetical. The same product may satisfy both æsthetic and utilitarian demands, while as explained in § 106, there is even a direct æsthetic interest attaching to objects or creatures that are perfectly formed for use. There is a popular notion that art ceases to be art when it serves a useful purpose, but recent observations have shown that such a purpose may be incidentally served without the product or act in question ceasing to be artistic (§ 4). This may all be true, and yet the broad fact remains that beauty and usefulness by no means necessarily co-exist, and their interests may often appear antagonistic. Hence in the creation of an architectural work that has to be at once convenient, sound in structure, and æsthetically satisfying, the designer may find himself beset by claims from opposite sides that are hard to reconcile. We are brought here into contact with the fundamental problem of architectural practice.

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[1] This convenient term which the Germans have borrowed from the Greek language means the philosophy of construction. The 'tectonic style,' as defined by von Brunn in connection with Greek decorative art, is a style of treatment dependent on a nice sense of structure and of the guidance which structure gives to the designer.

§ 130. The Relation of Utility and Art in Architecture.

That architectural practice is based on utility but rises out of this sphere into that of artistic expression was noticed long ago by Vitruvius, when he said of the public buildings of a city that they should exhibit Stability, Convenience, and Beauty.[1] The question is What relation should exist between the first two of these and Beauty. Some architectural theorists hold that considerations of art should be in direct and constant subordination to those of utility and structure, so that the building becomes what it is through a process of logical deduction from its 'program' or formula of requirements; while others would claim for the architectural designer an artistic freedom in the creation of forms not logically deducible from the program. M. Viollet-le-Duc, in his *Entretiens sur l'Architecture*,[2] insists on the need for subordination of the strictest kind, and sums up his view of the most important principles of architecture in the words '*respect absolu pour le vrai*.'

It may be said at once that this motto 'in all things truth' is a sound one, but hardly covers the whole field of legitimate architectural practice. It is indeed somewhat too simple and straightforward to correspond with all the actual facts of art. There are certain theories of the arts, of which this is one, that are apt to mislead through their temptingly easy and logical appearance. Of such a kind is the once-famous pre-Raffaelite theory of painting, according to which a close adherence to nature is the one secret of the art. There is no question that painting is bound to nature as the source from which it draws the breath of its being, and there is no question that the architect ignores utility or truth of construction at his peril, for they are the substantial basis of all his work. Yet on the other hand, in the case of all the arts, it happens not seldom that the element which gives a work its special value is just that element which is not covered by these plausible theories. The best picture is not always that which is nearest to nature, and in architecture the resources of the art are at times most tellingly displayed in the use of forms and details that are not strictly dependent on constructional exigencies. Æsthetic feeling may demand a somewhat free treatment of construction, and the addition of features for which there is no material need.

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[1] Haec autem ita fieri debent ut habeatur ratio firmitatis utilitatis venustatis. *De Architecturâ*, i. 3, 2.

[2] Paris, 1863, I. p. 333 note.

§ 131. The theory of 'respect absolu pour le vrai' tested by the Doric Façade.

The insufficiency of the above theory in its rigid form will be at once apparent when we test it by one of the most conspicuous pieces of architecture in the whole annals of the art—the façade of the Grecian Doric temple. That elevation is a typical piece of well thought-out consistent architectural composition, and is eulogized by writers of all schools. Yet it is only to a very modified extent an example of 'respect for truth.' The utilitarian demand was here a simple one. It was merely for a continuous canopy over the shrine within, upborne by supports that should admit of free access to and circulation about the shrine. The detailed forms of the façade depend not on use but on structure and material, and do not correspond with these with complete logical accuracy. The main elements of the construction —the upright supports and horizontal architrave beams—are indeed clear enough, and their form and their function agree as the theory demands. But this cannot be said of the second story of the entablature—the frieze. Absolutely necessary in the scheme of proportion, and the most important decorative feature of the whole, the frieze has no constructive significance. For all practical purposes it is just a second story added, for the sake of effect, above the really constructive feature of the architrave, and as for its special forms, what use or meaning in their present position have the triglyphs and metopes? No doubt they had once their significance, but this is only to be determined by archæologists, who, as a fact, cannot yet agree as to what really was the natural history of these curious features. If it be maintained that the triglyphs *are* constructive elements and represent the beam-ends of the roof, the rejoinder is easy: Once upon a time they probably did possess this character, but they had lost it long before the date of the great monumental temples, in which the stone beams of the portico-roof are lifted on to the top of the triglyphs and metopes, and are in no constructive relation thereto. If the triglyph mean a beam-end it is a sham; if it have no such significance, it is an arbitrary form adopted for artistic reasons and out of all relation to the logic of construction.

§ 132. The Architect need not be ashamed of Beauty, even when Independent of Construction.

That this should be so, is no reproach to the Greek façade, which is a noble work of art possessed of the essential elements of architectural beauty, and quite as 'true' as any work of art need ever be. It is however an argument of much weight against the extreme theory of 'respect absolu pour le vrai.' It is indeed not a little curious to find architects prepared to define their art as 'construction beautified' but nervously anxious that the beauty should always be in strict subordination to the structure. They forget that by the very act of adding beauty to their work they assert their artistic freedom. The beauty of the building may be in a close and organic relation to its use and structure, but it remains something distinct from either. As a product of art it preserves its characteristics of independence and spontaneity which have been vindicated for it on a previous page (§ 4). The addition of beauty to the Vitruvian stability and convenience is an act of choice quite outside of the sphere of utility. If we glance back at the history of civilized humanity, we see the genius of successive ages and peoples writing with the pen of beauty, on eternal monuments, the record of their aspirations and deeds; in every epoch we meet the architect at his task and discern in him the inspired mouthpiece of his people and his creed. Remembering all that the architects of the past have been able to express in the pregnant language of their craft, their modern successor might well be proud enough of the artistic element in his work to allow it a certain free range beyond the mere bounds of the program. Why should such a one not admit that architectural beauty may rightfully claim, in its relation to utility, something of the same latitude which in sculpture and painting is claimed on behalf of artistic effect as opposed to mere truth to nature? Is a building that depends for its main features on the formula of requirements any the worse because it adopts in freedom such additional features as are needed for the composition? Are we not justified in affirming that the practice of architecture, like that of painting and sculpture, rests to some extent on conventions, and is not a logical deduction from any one theory? The beauty and significance of architecture are not slavishly bound down to the exigencies of the more material side of the craft. From the first, let it be again repeated, architecture is 'an art of free and spontaneous expression,' and this character, as we shall presently see, remains with it throughout its long and varied history.

§ 133. The Principles of Architectural Design.

It may be useful to throw what has been said into a practical form as an outline of the principles of architectural design. There have to be considered, as we have seen, Utility, Structure, Æsthetic Quality, Significance. A single creative act, calling into being at a stroke a scheme in which all requirements are harmoniously combined, is the ideal architectural achievement, and some theorists assume that the different elements of a design take shape together in the artist's mind, so that there is no priority or sequence. As an actual fact however, there must be a definite starting-point in the formula of requirements, and from this the design of the whole is built up by a process which, though in certain cases it may be rapid enough, is yet always susceptible of analysis. It usually happens that the creation of the scheme, even in its most general shape, is neither spontaneous nor rapid, but the result rather of prolonged labour and contrivance involving the constant adjustment of conflicting claims. Through all the working and re-working of these problems there is a single guiding principle to be held in view, Give use and structure the priority but let them in return serve the cause of art: On the foundation of utility mould the design to beauty and significance. This principle will work out in practice somewhat as follows.

The artist's comprehension of his program, which he should so assimilate as to make it part of himself, results in his own mind in a general scheme of the relative size and distribution of the requisite spaces, compendiously described as the Plan. These spaces, at any rate in a public building, serve not merely a useful but an ideal purpose, and considerations of display as well as those of convenience help to determine the manner in which they are to be approached, lighted, and enclosed. This disposition of interior spaces necessarily conditions that subdivision of the external mass on which composition depends. The interests of utility and beauty are brought here into a relation that the designer must handle with all his artistic tact. In the simple instance of the Christian church the need of separate housing for the altar necessitates the apse or chancel; that of space for ecclesiastical functions the transept; to secure more room for the congregation, while avoiding difficulties in roofing, side-aisles are added to the nave. Utility, and, in the altar-house, display, determine the distribution of the spaces, and the same considerations prescribe the general scheme of any public building, secular or sacred, that has to serve ideal as well as utilitarian ends. In all cases the internal arrangements are expressed on the exterior by varied masses that break up the main structure. Externally there are produced among these some complex relations of size and position which the artist has to harmonize, and with which he will deal as artist rather than as mathematician. These subdivisions of the original mass are the elements out of which is created architectural beauty. They are a growth from within outwards, but at the same time dimensions, forms, proportions, relative positions, are not fixed in pedantic formulæ but are subject to modification, and should be moulded in freedom to a beauty and an expressiveness which only art can win for them.

The same principle applies to the smaller features of a building as distinct from its main divisions. Such features are mouldings, base-courses, cornices, door- and window-framings, and the like, and these must be carefully distinguished from architectural ornament. They are a more integral part of the fabric and are indeed a part that is essential to architectural effect. A building can reach the highest standard of architectural sublimity, beauty and expressiveness without any ornament at all, but it is not equally independent of the features just named. They are necessary complements of the original process of breaking up the unity of the structure. Merely to subdivide a mass, and group its parts and its openings in pleasing relations, is not enough, if the parts are mere plain parallelopipeds and the openings are bare unframed apertures in a wall. A certain apparatus of the minor features in question is requisite for the purpose of lending accent and significance to the divisions, and doing all the artistic service to the structure that can be rendered by frame or border or plinth or cresting.

If the main divisions of the building follow as we have just seen from considerations of use and display, the smaller features are to a large extent dependent on Structure, and structure at once introduces the question of Material, while the architectural treatment of structure and material brings us face to face with the phenomenon of specific Style.

Historical styles are due to the fact that there are established methods, some natural others traditional, of putting together the various materials used in building, and the resultant forms have been used over and over again in successive epochs by a sort of recognized convention. When old materials and processes are dealt with, treatment is almost necessarily conditioned by these established conventions, but the introduction of a new material makes a difference, for this may suggest its own external treatment in forms for which there is no precedent. Whether the conventional forms or new ones are employed matters little, so long as the latter are as technically correct and as pleasing to the eye as the older forms; in other words, specific differences of style do not touch the principles of architectural design, for these are prior to and independent of the styles.

The smaller features, that are for the moment under notice, derived as they are from material and structure either directly or through a historical tradition of style, are to be treated with the same combination of æsthetic tact and commonsense which presides over the composition at large, for the example of the Doric façade encourages the artist to exercise here also, within due limits, his artistic freedom. A similar prescription may be applied, with some modifications, to Ornament.

In the case of ornament, indeed, the artist may be supposed to enjoy entire freedom, but this is not the case. Ornament is not a mere fanciful adjunct to a building for the sake of enhancing its æsthetic charm. It is not only connected, as will presently be noticed, with the character of the monument, but is in relation also to its structure. It is not however like mouldings and similar features, a necessary outcome of structure or material, but bears to the building the relation of a separable accident. That ornament can be dispensed with, is proved by those existing monuments which produce the full effect of architecture without any aid of the kind. The Greek temple at Pæstum exhibits now no ornament or polychrome decoration; yet it is one of the most perfectly satisfying structures to the architectural sense that the world has to show. The church of St. Front at Périgueux in western France is a conspicuous medieval example. The work of Sir Christopher Wren, again, owes practically nothing to ornament.

Ornament, on the other hand, though it may be classed with colour as not essential to architectural effect, is of higher value than colour as an artistic adjunct. It is a feature of especial moment as an aid to the expression of a building, and may help more than any part of it to make its character and human significance intelligible. By association and allusion or by franker statement it interprets the monument, and fixes its place in the national or social economy. While mindful ever of its tectonic relation to the structure, by its accent or its symbolism it will touch with the glamour of poetry both the material and the human facts which underlie the external show. Ornament of a really artistic kind is to a monument what a necklet of fine gold-work is to a beautiful woman. Her comeliness is perfect without it, yet it enhances her charm, as that of the Parthenon was heightened by the girdling frieze. If the jewel on her bosom be the keepsake of a soldier lover, she is touched with a more visionary grace, as was the Athenian shrine when the Guardian Goddess stood forth, new born, above its eastern portal.

In all parts of architectural design, accordingly, the artist will deal in rational freedom with the material offered to him. Utility and structure determine this material as mere ὕλη, and indicate without absolutely prescribing the form. It is the function of the architect to work upon this form till it gain the beauty and significance of the perfect artistic product.

In what follows it will be impossible to illustrate all the many aspects of architectural theory and practice. The principles of planning on the one side, though of fundamental importance, must be passed over as their discussion would involve considerations which do not wholly belong to the artistic aspect of the art,[1] while architectural ornament, on the other side, belongs in great part to the domain of the decorative arts with which this book makes no attempt to deal. In the sections which follow, the theme under treatment will necessarily be a limited one, and their main purpose is to exhibit the dependence of artistic features on material and construction. A study of the manner in which in the past ages of the art the designer has dealt with these elements will bring us into near contact with what is most essentially architectural in the practice of the art.

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[1] There are some good remarks on the artistic side of planning in Mr. Statham's work noticed in the introductory chapter, p. 1.

If we examine the relation to construction of architectural impressiveness and beauty, we shall see to what extent the artistic qualities of architecture depend on, or are developed out of, construction; how far they may be legitimately independent of construction, and become in this way matters of artistic choice rather than of strict logical deduction.

§ 134. Characteristics of building materials: Stone, and its Natural Symbolism.

Construction, it hardly needs to be said, depends greatly on material. We will consider therefore in order the chief materials used by the builder, and inquire to what architectural effects in each case they most naturally lend themselves. These materials are stones of different shapes, irregular or squared, and of varying sizes; clay, in formless but plastic lumps, or moulded into rectangular bricks; finally wood in the forms of the pliant branch, the sapling and tree trunk, or the squared beam and sawn plank.

Stone as building material carries with it a kind of natural symbolism of which the architect in different ages has known how to take account. In the first place, when used in large masses it supplies the designer with means for increasing the apparent grandeur of his edifice. A building constructed of huge blocks of stone at once gains a certain air of majesty which stands for an increase of size, and small structures can attain through this device to architectural sublimity. A standard illustration is the tomb of Theodoric at Ravenna, from the sixth century of our era, which though of modest dimensions recalls by its massiveness the megalithic structures of primeval days: the cupola crowning it is hollowed out of a single vast block of stone more than thirty feet in diameter. Monolithic columns are far grander than those composed of small pieces, and the Egyptians by plastering over their built-up columns, and the Greeks by fitting the drums of theirs so closely that the joints almost disappeared, were aiming at a monolithic effect. On the contrary, at the Madeleine in Paris the smallness of the stones of which the columns are constructed is made painfully apparent by conspicuous joints, and the effect of them is hopelessly impoverished. The artistic function of big materials is thus summed up by James Fergusson:

'It is the expression of giant power and the apparent eternity of duration which they convey; and in whatever form that may be presented to the human mind, it always produces a sentiment tending towards sublimity, which is the highest effect at which architecture or any other art can aim.'[1]

Again, there is about stone a natural symbolism that resides in its earth-born and primeval character. The ancient walls called Cyclopean or Pelasgic, of which the ramparts of Tiryns and Mycenæ are the most conspicuous examples, are often built of huge polygonal blocks, hardly touched by the tool but fitted according to their accidents of shape. Such structures are imposing through their *rock-like* aspect and seem to be the children of mother-earth. Very different is the effect of squared-stonework. This has a natural symbolism of a higher kind. It is the production of intelligence and gives at once a human interest to the structure, which appeals to us on the grounds drawn out in § 104. Further, the horizontal beds and vertical joints convey at once the essential relation of the structure to the ground, and the upward tendency of its elevation. It is earth-based, but rises to a place in the world of men.

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[1] *History of Architecture*, I. p. 20.

There is a simple and natural treatment of stonework, by which it is made to combine the two effects just indicated, and to remain rocky and elemental but at the same time an ordered product of reason. This is through a bossy or 'rustic' treatment much favoured by the great stone builders of the world, more especially the Phœnicians. Originally no doubt merely to save labour, the stone blocks were only fully squared-up upon and near the surfaces of contact, the middle part of the outer face of the mass being left rough and projecting. Such treatment appeared so apposite, that it has been used deliberately through a great part of architectural history as an element of artistic effect, and the example is a very good one of an exigency of construction turned to æsthetic ends. Not only does this Rustication carry with it an air of primeval stability and strength which makes it invaluable for use in the basement stories of monumental buildings, but it also gives variety of texture and even of tone to an elevation. Brunelleschi employed this motive with very noble effect in the Pitti Palace at Florence, as Michelozzi had already done in his earlier Palazzo Riccardi, shown in Plate VI, while in our own time Bryce's imposing Bank of Scotland, on its terraced substructures at Edinburgh, is as good an instance as could be named of its sagacious employment.

§ 135. Brick, and the Constructive Forms evolved from its use.

Passing from stone to clay or brick, we lose monumental character but discover new elements of architectural effect that evolve themselves naturally out of the use of the material. Clay is formless and devoid of natural suggestion, but when wrought into bricks these carry with them certain consequences of their parallelopiped shape. Brick—generally used in the ancient world 'crude' or sun-dried, not burnt in the kiln—is not so firm a material as stone and a wall of it needs some strengthening. This it receives from the Buttress, a familiar feature on the common garden wall. The buttress occurs in some of the oldest existing monuments of civilized building, the mound-temples of lower Babylonia, where the vast solid structures of crude brick show regular projections of the same material, the use of which is obviously to counteract the thrust outwards of the heaped-up mass. Further, the buttress may have given the first suggestion of the form of the Tower. Towers flank at regular intervals the brick walls of Baby-

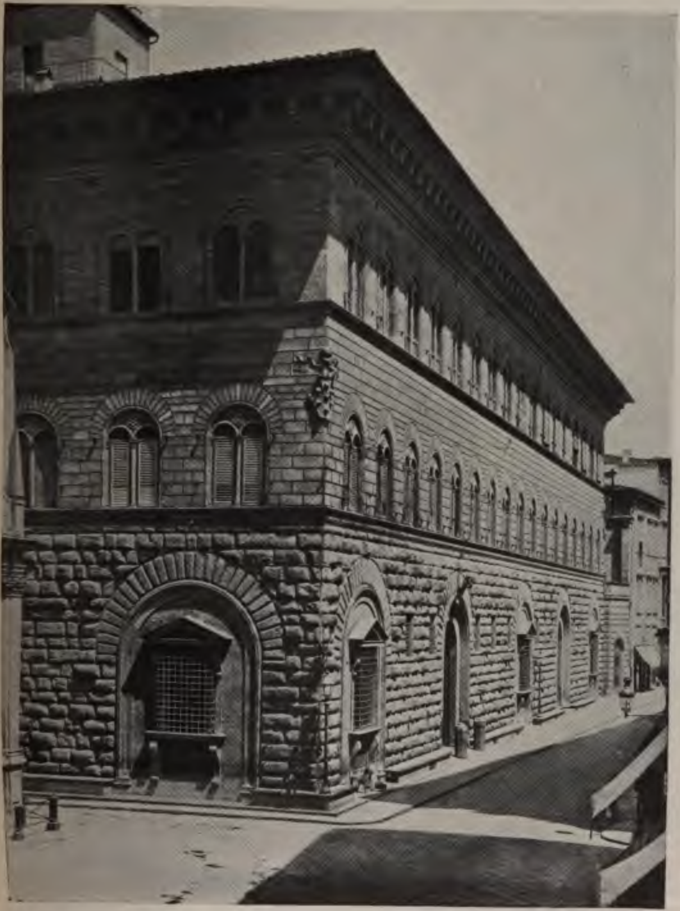

PLATE VI. To face p. 286.
Palazzo Riccardi, Florence.

carry with them certain natural suggestions; the economical evasion of labour in leaving rough the face of a building-stone is turned to the service of architectural expression; the projecting buttress, bastion or tower—used in stone structures as well as brick—has the important merit of enriching an elevation with light-and-shade, and with strongly marked vertical lines which secure the divisions so necessary in composition; the battlement breaks the edge of the summit and gives artistic finish to the whole structure.

§ 136. The Arch, as derived from Construction in small materials: its æsthetic value.

Another important architectural form is arrived at in the process of construction with small materials such as bricks or stones, and this is the arch.

It is easy to construct walls and solid mounds of clay or bricks or stones, and so to enclose a space or reach an elevation, but it is by no means so easy to cover-in the enclosures thus formed, or to contrive chambers in the midst of the solid masses. Where no additional material is available, this can only be accomplished by the use of some form of the arch or vault, a constructive device known from the remotest antiquity, and used as a rule among all peoples whose natural building material is clay or brick, but one which does not play an important part in architecture proper till a comparatively late period. The arch, and the vault which may be looked on as generated from the arch, possess the marked constructive

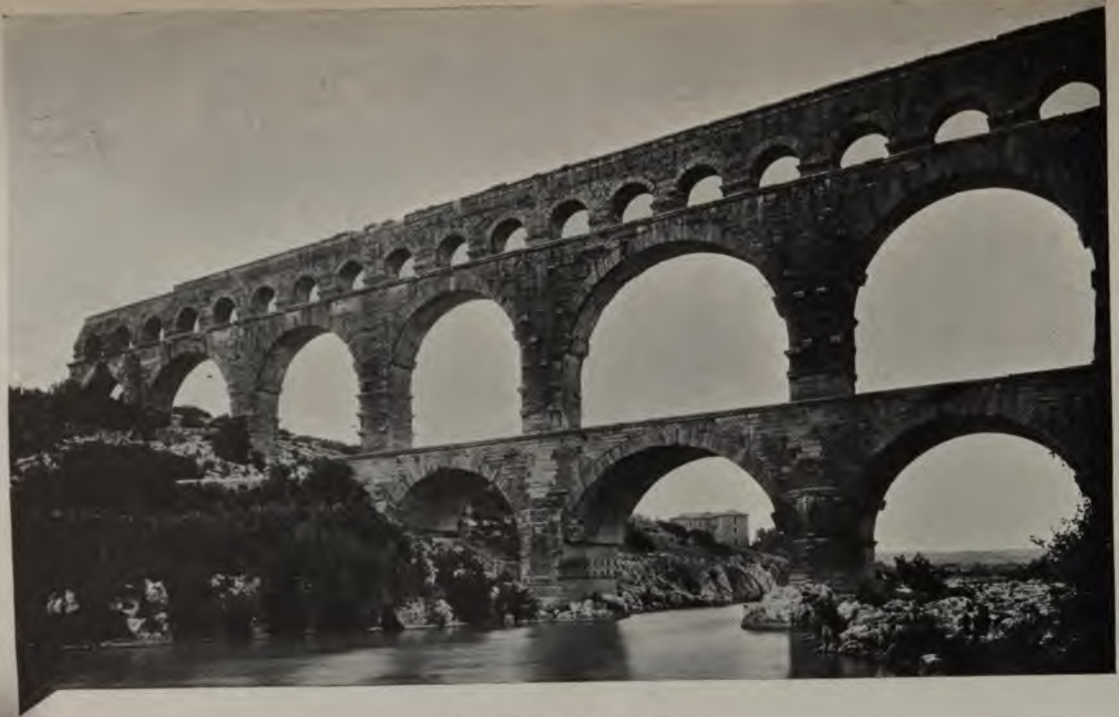

PLATE VII. To face p. 288.

Roman Aqueduct, known as the Pont du Gard, near Nimes in Southern France.

property of exercising a lateral thrust, the nature and conditions of which are too well known to need demonstration in this place, while in their æsthetic aspect they present always curved forms, in the shape of a half-round or portion of an ellipse, or of two curves or combination of curves meeting above in a point. Such a form occurring in contrast to the straight lines and right angles naturally predominant in buildings reared of parallelopiped bricks or cut stones, is of itself artistically pleasing. A series of such forms, as in a bridge or an aqueduct, such as the Roman example on Plate VII, has in itself considerable beauty as well as majesty; while if we suppose a wall broken with arched openings of different sizes arranged according to some scheme of artistic composition, or a cupola or series of cupolas rising above a rectangular substructure, or again, from the interior, a hollow dome covering and embracing an internal space, we have at once the essential elements of architectural effect. As a fact however (and this in part for a reason to be presently considered) the step in this instance from utility to art, that is to say, the advance from the mere employment of such a constructive form for purposes of utility, to the deliberate handling of it so as to produce a calculated artistic impression, was not made in the most ancient times. In ancient Egypt, in Babylonia and Assyria, the vault of clay or of crude sun-dried brick was used to cover small apartments or galleries, or as a dome formed the roof of store-rooms, granaries, or village cabins, like those shown in the Assyrian relief given in Fig. 6. In Assyria and in Etruscan Italy, the well-known strength of a vaulted covering, when properly buttressed up at the flanks, was taken advantage of in the construction of underground drains and conduits. In Italy the arch was early employed for bridges and aqueducts. In Assyria, Asia Minor and Etruria the apertures in walls, such as the gates of a city or a palace, were terminated above by the arch. These peoples were accordingly familiar with the aspect of the arch and vault, (1) as an opening in an elevation, (2) as an internal covering, (3) as an external cupola, but we do not find anything like the evolution of an arched style till near the time of the Roman Empire.

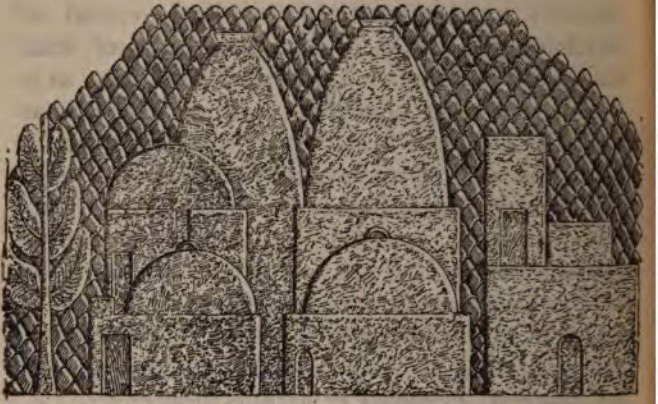

FIG. 6.—Group of domed houses from an Assyrian relief.

§ 137. Evolution of an Arched Style: The Arch at Rome.

There is, indeed, a wide gulf between the primitive structures just noticed, and the magnificent domes and vaults that are the glories of Roman Imperial architecture. This gulf may have been gradually bridged over by a series of vaulted structures that have now perished. Alexander the Great and his successors founded numerous Greek cities in the nearer East, the original home of the tradition of vault building, and in these it is likely that experiments were made which bore result in the famous existing structures at Rome. The Pantheon, one of the grandest interiors ever produced by an architect, relies for its main effect upon the simple form of the hemispherical dome known to the Egyptians and Assyrians, enlarged to the scale of sublimity, and so translated from the sphere of utility to that of art. The Romans, however, never really worked out an arched style, for they could not trust the arch by itself to produce the necessary artistic 'membering' of a façade, nor did they show any appreciation of the external effect of the cupola. It was reserved for the Byzantine designers, and following them, the architects of the Renaissance, to lift the dome boldly above the substructure, and, as in St. Paul of London, make it the dominating feature of a great architectural composition; while it was not until the Renaissance that the Wall, constructed like the Palazzo Pitti or Riccardi at Florence (Plate VI), of massive rusticated masonry, and broken only by a composition of arched openings, was allowed to stand forth in its noble simplicity as not *building* only but *architecture.*

Nor again on the constructive side did the Romans follow out the principle of the arch. The lateral thrust, already spoken of, would be exercised most freely were the arch composed of wedge-shaped stones fitted in together, but without mortar or clamps or other binding material. In such a case, if left unbuttressed at the side, the arch would at once give way both at the summit and 'shoulders.' It is obvious however that in proportion as the materials of the arch are made to adhere closely together, the less lateral support will it require, while a vault quite homogeneous in structure would require none. The Romans, constructing their vaults mainly of more or less homogeneous concrete, got rid to a large extent of the difficulty of the lateral thrust, but this again confronted the medieval builders when they began in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to roof their churches with stone vaults.

§ 138. The Arch in the hands of Medieval Builders: The Gothic Style.

At this epoch there appeared in France a school of builders gifted with the finest scientific insight into constructive problems, and from their hands proceeded the early Gothic cathedral, which in its essentials, though not in its details, is to be regarded as a logical deduction from the constructive principles of the arch, modified in every portion by that effort after beauty and significance in forms which turns the construction of utility into one of art.

In this building almost all the features are conditioned in the first place by construction, but modified and added to on artistic grounds. The generating centre of the whole is the stone vault, which is pointed in section, and from this all the rest is evolved. The vault is divided into a succession of compartments each of which is formed by the intersection of two pointed barrel vaults. The lines of intersection crossing the compartment diagonally from corner to corner are marked by projecting ribs, the use of which was introduced in certain earlier barrel vaults of stone in the south of France, belonging to the Romanesque period. The function of these ribs is to collect the thrusts or pressures exercised by the stones composing the vault, and carry them away to the corners, where they are accordingly concentrated. These pressures are of two kinds,—directly downward owing to the weight of the materials, and lateral owing to the characteristics of the arch. The direct weight is carried down to the ground by long slender pillars or shafts of stone, between which (as there is no need for any solid stonework which would have nothing to support) there is interposed a light screen of glass framed in upright and transverse bars of stonework. In theory, and often as a fact, each one of the undergirding ribs of the vault is waited on by a distinct vertical shaft which transmits its weight to the ground. These shafts are bound together in groups and so descend as a single though complex pier to the base of the whole. The lateral pressures, on the other hand, are collected as just stated into the corners, and are there met and counteracted exactly at the right spot, in pressures exerted in a counter direction by arches leaning up against the outside of the buildings—the so-called flying buttresses. To give these flying buttresses in their turn a proper resistance, they spring from solid pillars erected at the requisite distance from the building, while these pillars themselves are rendered more stable by being weighted above by masses of masonry. This contrivance secures due lateral support to north and south all along the nave: at the choir end, the series of vaults terminates in a rounded apse encircled with its flying buttresses, which itself serves as an abutment to prevent any yielding towards the east; while at the west or entrance end of the church two massive towers, useful also for carrying bells, present a corresponding resistance at the other extremity of the series.

These are the essentials of the Gothic structure. Other prominent features such as the transepts, the side aisles, the radiating chapels, have no special constructive significance, and for the present purpose we may consider the building *as a series of arched canopies of stone resting on slender pillars at each corner, the outward thrusts being abutted at the western end by the solid mass of the towers, and everywhere else met and counteracted by the opposing pressure of arches, thrown inwards from rigid pillars weighted by masonry, that at a suitable distance surround the edifice.*

§ 139. Construction and Beauty in the Gothic Edifice.

We thus obtain the idea of a somewhat elaborate and complex building the form of which is all logically determined by constructive considerations. So far the work answers exactly to the description of a piece of modern engineering, and we may ask Where does the art make its appearance? Why is the Gothic cathedral always so beautiful, the engineering structure so often hideous? The answer is that the Gothic builders, advancing from utility to art, partly followed the hints of their construction in the direction of beauty, and partly made additions to the same end independent of utility altogether. In the first place the Gothic architect possessed as his determining unit of construction the pointed arch, a form in itself extremely beautiful, and flexible in use. He did not invent it nor did he adopt it on æsthetic grounds, for it was employed, not only by the Saracens from the ninth century onwards, but also in France before the Gothic period in the Romanesque barrel vaults already spoken of, where it was probably used for constructive reasons because it exercises less lateral pressure than a round arch of equal span. So soon however as he did adopt it, he made the most of its æsthetic capabilities in a manner not in fashion among modern engineers.

The pointed arch can be raised to any desired elevation, and in early Gothic is always loftier than a round arch of equal span; it carries with it accordingly a suggestion of height and slenderness, and as these qualities suited the temper of religious enthusiasm that belonged to the age, they soon became the predominant note of the whole structure, so that at Beauvais the light canopies of stone on their delicate vertical shafts floated in the air a hundred and fifty feet above the pavement. The bars or mullions of stone, framing the panels of glass which filled the lateral spaces between the supports, were disposed in those exquisite combinations of curves which give its fame to Gothic window-tracery. The masses of stonework weighting the piers, from which spring the flying buttresses, were moulded into the elegant forms of pinnacles—features that play such a part in the artistic effect of the whole building that it is often forgotten that they have a constructive origin and use. Throughout the building in the same manner constructive forms became modified for artistic reasons, and as the modification was all in the direction of breaking up solid masses and multiplying slender and elegant features, the whole building came to wear that look of indescribable grace and lightness which is the glory of the Gothic style.

In Plate VIII, from the well-known work of Gailhabaud,[1] is shown the construction of a bay of a Gothic nave. On the right-hand side is the external view showing the piers, pinnacles and flying buttresses, while on the left there is a section through the axial line of the building that exhibits the method of supporting the vault and the con-

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[1] *L'Architecture, etc., du Vme au XVIIme Siècle*, Paris, 1858, vol. I.

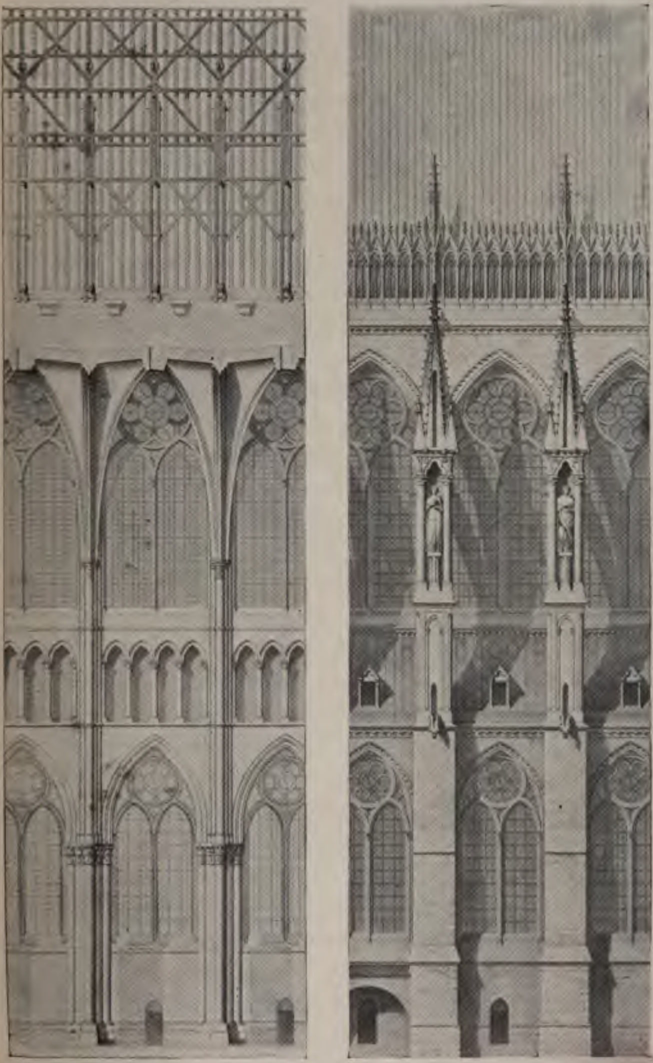

Plate VIII. To face p. 296.

Analysis of Gothic Construction, Rheims Cathedral. From Gailhabau

uction and height of the external roof of wood. ost of the points indicated in the text will be nd illustrated in this drawing.

§ 140. Free expression and Beauty in Gothic, independent of Construction.

It would be however a mistake to suppose that l the characteristic beauties of Gothic are due mply to the artistic manipulation of forms pro-ced for utility. In the interesting essay on *othic Architecture* by Mr. C. H. Moore of Cam-ridge, Massachusetts,[1] the writer reviews the atures of the Gothic edifice one by one, carefully ointing out in the manner of M. Viollet-le-Duc e constructive origin of each, until he comes to e spire, of which he justly says: 'Of external atures none is more striking, and after the flying ttress, none shows more of the Gothic spirit, an the stone spire with which, in the design, if t in the executed work, the tower was crowned.' r. Moore makes no attempt however to explain e use of the spire in construction, and as a fact valid constructive ground can be assigned to it its developed form. Regarded as a not un-tural evolution out of the low pyramidal cap at formed a common termination to the earlier omanesque towers, it is connected with structure, ut the heaven-piercing spire is quite a different ing from the squat pyramid, and we must ccordingly pronounce that this—the most beauti-l and significant feature of the whole building— a free creation of art. Mr. Moore continues:

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[1] London and New York, 1890. (Second Edition, 1899.)

'It is a feature, too, which more emphatically perhaps than any other, marks the communal spirit and influence. The spire formed the governing feature in any general view of the medieval town, and was a sign of municipal power and prosperity. It was natural, therefore, that the spire should call forth the special enthusiasm and effort of the lay builders.'[1]

This is true—and the remark is an additional proof how much more there is in architecture than mere beauty of line and mass—but the important and significant point of the matter is, that the artistic spirit, which in the rest of the building is content to wait on construction and follow out the hints thus given in the direction of harmony and beauty, here shows itself independently creative, and vindicates for itself that freedom which is denied to it by those who harp on the assertion—sound enough so far as it goes—that architecture is just 'construction beautified.' The same thing may be said about the high-pitched external roof of the Gothic cathedral. At Rheims cathedral, according to the section given on Plate VIII, the ridge of the external roof rises above the crown of the internal vault of stone to a height fully half as great as the elevation of the latter from the floor. A shelving roof of timber and lead is of course needful for the protection of the upper surface of the stone vaults (just as there must be a cover of some kind to the tower), but the great height to which, especially in France, the ridge is finally raised is unnecessary, and is to be regarded as an artistic form corresponding to the élancé spire, and bearing emphatic testimony to the predominant *æsthetic* character of the whole vast edifice.

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[1] *Gothic Architecture*, p. 113.

§ 141. Summary of the foregoing.

Looking back now on the ground traversed, we find that construction in clay, brick or small materials gives us the wall broken with projecting buttresses and crowned with battlements. It generates for us the arch, the curved forms of which, in bridge or aqueduct or gateway, are always charming, and which, surmounting door or window opening, gives architectural character to a façade. It produces the dome, a telling feature of external or internal effect, with the other forms of the vault, and finally, by a logical following out of the mechanical peculiarities of the arch, it culminates in the Gothic cathedral, the most perfect combination of logical construction with art that the world has ever seen.

The above examples show that the harmonious subdivision and play of part against part, which make the life of architecture, may be readily evolved (if the requisite artistic feeling be forthcoming) from the constructive forms that have their basis in utility. Art has in these cases to develop embryo, to emphasise uncertain forms; but at the same time it must be prepared on fitting occasions to rise beyond construction and become freely creative. In the use of these derived or created forms it is the function of art to attend narrowly to the placing of each feature in relation to the whole, and above all to combine these features into that harmony through which the whole becomes the expression of a single thought.

§ 142. Monolithic Stone Construction in relation to architectural Beauty.

Let us turn now to consider in the same manner the natural history of construction in other building materials and to observe in other connections the same evolution of Architecture out of Building.

Stone offers itself as building material, not only in the form of small blocks, but of huge slabs and beams which can be so placed as to enclose and cover a space without the use of the arch. The Dolmens already referred to (§ 18) are the most primitive types of such construction, and we possess in the very ancient Egyptian building known as the Temple of the Sphinx—perhaps the oldest existing monument of civilized architecture—what appears to be a building of the same type, but regularly and carefully constructed. The elements of this building (fully described and illustrated in Perrot's *Égypte*[1]) are upright pillars of granite carefully squared and smoothed, placed at regular distances and covered above by massive slabs of the same material (Fig. 7). The interior thus formed may have been used as a funeral chapel for one of the builders of the Pyramids of Ghizeh, and may well have been developed out of the Dolmen. One peculiarity of the structure is that, though much skill and labour have been spent in squaring, smoothing and fitting the stones, there are no mouldings and no decorative features of any kind, nor any device for breaking up the masses, and so giving to the eye the satisfaction of measuring proportions. The fact that all these familiar elements in architectural effect are here conspicuously absent is commented on by historians of architecture, who fail however sometimes to grasp its significance. The truth is that the Dolmen and the Temple of the Sphinx are examples of massive stone construction of the purest type, construction, as we might say, in

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[1] Paris, 1882, ch. iv.

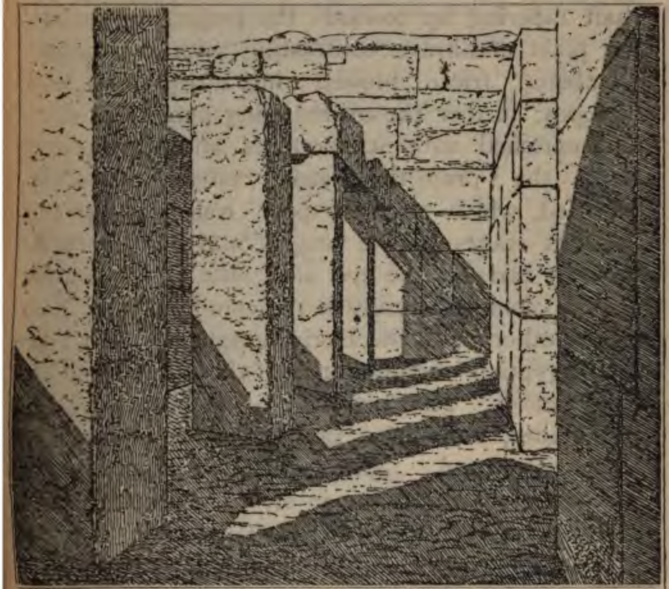

FIG. 7.—So-called Temple of the Sphinx.

monoliths, and such construction offers no suggestion or embyro form which might be worked out into these dividing and connecting features which are so necessary for architectural composition. Contrast the Doric façade (Plate III, p. 60) with the constructive scheme of the Temple of the Sphinx. The former gives the fluted column-shaft tapering up towards the projecting capital, the plain architrave contrasting with the richly-membered frieze broken into triglyphs and metopes; further the overhanging cornice profiled and enriched with its mutules and drops, and lastly the projecting string-courses plain or moulded, which separate part from part in the different stages of the height, and at the same time, by carrying the eye along the whole façade, give an element of unity to the composition. Yet, on the other hand, the Doric temple has also, like the Egyptian monument, an air of monolithic construction. The columns are not in fact, but in appearance, monoliths, the architrave is that of Egypt repeated. The whole is exceedingly massive, even megalithic in style. Whence come the diversifying elements in the Greek façade upon which so much of its artistic effect depends?

§ 143. Transference of Timber forms to Stone, the secret of ancient Architecture.

The real secret of ancient architecture is only understood when we regard the forms so familiar in classical stonework as not stone forms at all, but as forms *transferred to stone* from previous construction in quite a different material. We come in contact here with one of the fundamental conventions of architecture—*the transference to one material of forms which really belong to another*, and their adaptation in their new connection to purely artistic purposes. This is undoubtedly a contravention of the principle that architecture is 'construction beautified,' for it is a fact that most of the features and details which make the life of monumental buildings are not the logical outcome of the construction employed, but are conventional forms that have the highest artistic, but no constructive significance. Whether a massive stone style could ever have developed these features is more than doubtful. The development of such a style, which seemed to have begun in Egypt when the Dolmen became the Temple of the Sphinx, came to a sudden standstill, and a change was made, both in Egypt and afterwards in Greece, to a style that used stone indeed as its material, but borrowed all its features from construction in wood.

§ 144. An illustration from Ancient Egypt.

The following is one illustration of this transference. No feature in a building is of more importance than the projecting cornice which terminates the elevation with marked lines of light-and-shade. Now the Egyptians and the inhabitants of Asia Minor and Syria possessed excellent building-stone, and knew well from time immemorial how to hew and to carve it—yet they never developed a cornice out of their stonework, and might have gone on for ever rearing smooth or buttressed walls without any such crowning feature, had it not been for the hints they derived from far humbler structures. If the reader will turn back to page 57 he will see a sketch of the earliest Egyptian shrine put together of poles and wattlework. The shed or arbour thus formed is terminated above by what looks like a continuous line or tuft of twigs or brushwood, such as in structures of wood, or of mud with timber framings like the elementary structure in Fig. 8, could be made to serve as a breastwork round the flat roof of stamped earth. Now almost all the monumental buildings of Egypt are crowned above with a stone cornice which evidently imitates this primitive feature of the slight wooden huts of the people. The form is always the following (Fig. 9): The half-round at the base of the cornice represents the upper member of a timber framing,

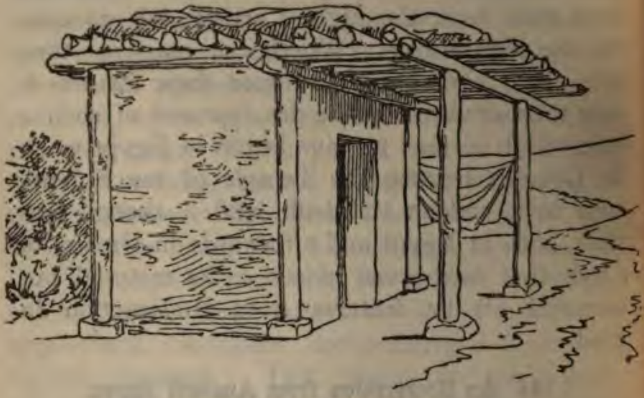

FIG. 8.—Primitive Hut, from Asia Minor.

the vertical divisions always painted on the hollow of the front are reminiscent of the upright lines of the original stems of brushwood. Not only was the crowning member thus derived transferred to stone, but it became universal, and appears not only in Egypt but among neighbouring peoples, so that for thousands of years, till the Greek mouldings came into fashion, this was practically the only artistic finish to a monumental stone structure known in the ancient world.[1] The material itself in the hands even of those mighty stone

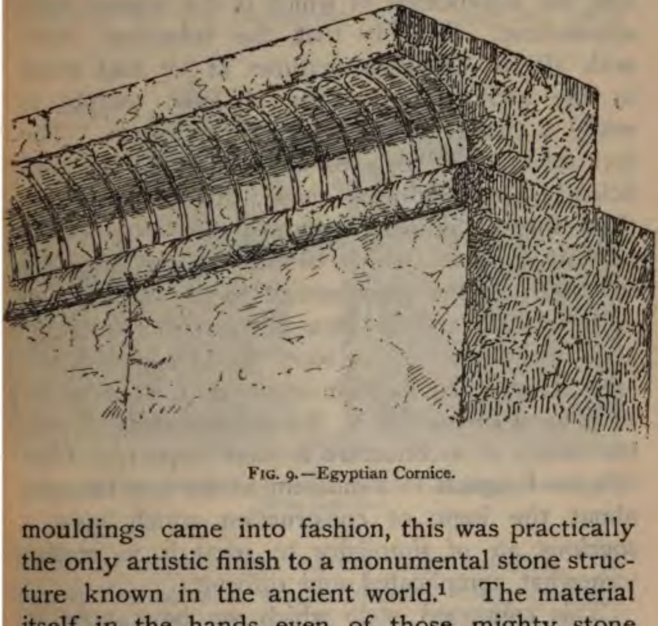

FIG. 9.—Egyptian Cornice.

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[1] It is true that a crowning member, looking like a row of shields rounded at the top, occurs on old Syrian fortresses depicted in Egyptian inscriptions, and was copied in one instance by an Egyptian stone building, the pavilion of Medinet Habu. This form probably originated in actual shields of wood placed on the top of a wall for protection. See Perrot's *Égypte*, p. 467.

builders, the Phœnicians, seemed barren of any suggestion that could have been taken up and developed into an alternative form.

§ 145. The Columned Style originates in Wood-Construction.

The Egyptian cornice leads us naturally to a fact, the significance of which is not always fully appreciated. This is that the columned style with all its attendant features, as we find them in the architecture of the Hellenic temple, is really a timber style transferred to stone. The fact we are all ready to admit, but do we sufficiently appreciate the consequent consideration that the mouldings, columns, pilasters, bases, capitals, cornices, which to the modern architect in stone are the grammatical forms whereby he embodies his artistic ideas in current language, are conventions, or as some fanatics would say 'shams,' and had in their origin no relation at all to stone construction? No point connected with the theory of architecture is more important than this, for it upsets in a moment all the easy theories about the logic of construction which give a specious air of simplicity to what is in reality somewhat complicated and difficult.

This columned style which we have now to analyse from the point of view of the logic of construction, has prevailed in various modifications throughout architectural history. All the ancient peoples of whom the history of architecture takes account (with the exception of the brick-building Babylonians and Assyrians) were familiar with it, and it flourished in Egypt and Phœnicia as well as in Greece and ancient Italy. Sometimes the actual material was stone and sometimes wood, but in every case the forms are timber forms and show that a columned style in wood preceded similar construction in stone. For example the Palace of Solomon (1 Kings vii. 1-12) was built of wood in the columned style, and the early Etruscan temples were of the same material. In Egypt the colossal stone columns, some of them seventy feet in height, are made after the similitude of slight supports of wood, representations of which are numerous in the wall paintings on the tombs, and their shape is that of the papyrus stem or bundle of stems crowned with a bud or open flower as capital. Below they stand always on a round disc of stone which was originally the base

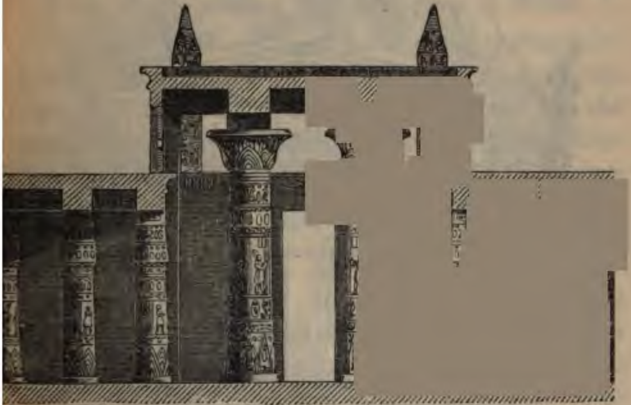

FIG. 10.—Section of part of Hypostyle Hall, Karnak, showing bud and flower Capitals.

of a wooden column necessary to preserve it from contact with the damp earth (see Fig. 8). Specimens of these floral columns are shown in Fig. 10. Grecian Doric in some of its forms (mutules, drops, etc.) is obviously carpenter's work, and the same is true of the dentils of the Ionic cornice.

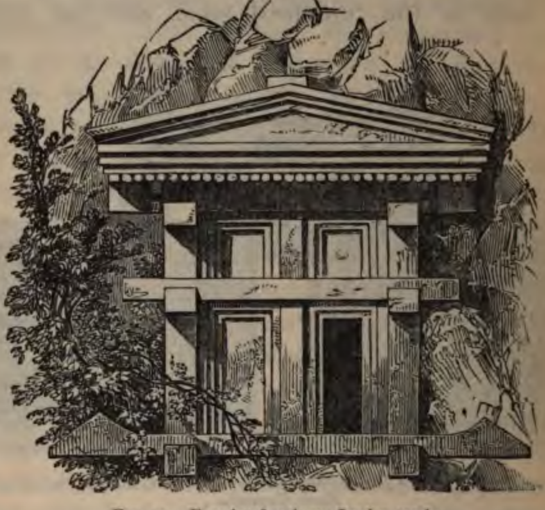

FIG. 11.—Façade of rock-cut Lycian tomb.

A comparison with forms occurring in Persia shows that the Ionic architrave is copied from three superimposed beams of timber, each projecting slightly beyond the one below.[1] The recent exploration of Olympia made it plain that the Heræum, probably the oldest Greek Temple of which remains have come down to us, had not only a wooden entablature, but also columns of wood, which were replaced from time to time by columns of stone, and the last one of which Pausanias actually saw[1] when he visited the place in the second century A.D. Fig. 11 shows the façade of a rock-cut tomb in Asia Minor, in which the transference of timber forms to stone is very boldly carried out.

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[1] Dieulafoy, *L'Art Antique de la Perse*, Paris, 1884, etc. pt. 2.

§ 146. Characteristics of Construction in Wood.

The most obvious characteristics of timber construction are (1) the form, and the comparatively large size, of the structural elements, and (2) the manner of putting the materials together. Upright posts joined together by horizontal beams form the simplest scheme of construction, and here the different members boldly meeting at right angles present strongly marked contrasts in direction, as in Fig. 12, where the vertical and horizontal pieces are united above by common tenon-and-mortice joints at A and B. As it is not easy to secure rigidity at the joints owing to the length of the vertical arms which would act as powerful levers to stir the tenons in the mortice-holes, it is common to introduce a further member either at right angles to the verticals, like the cross-piece C, or laid diagonally across the corner as at D, or filling in the corner with a solid triangular block like E. These additional pieces act in resisting lateral movement and keep all firm.

In wood-construction accordingly we may expect to find long extended lines corresponding to the shape of planks or beams; the principal members of the framework will cross each other at right angles, and the corners may be filled in by

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[1] *Descript. Græciæ*, v, 16, 1.

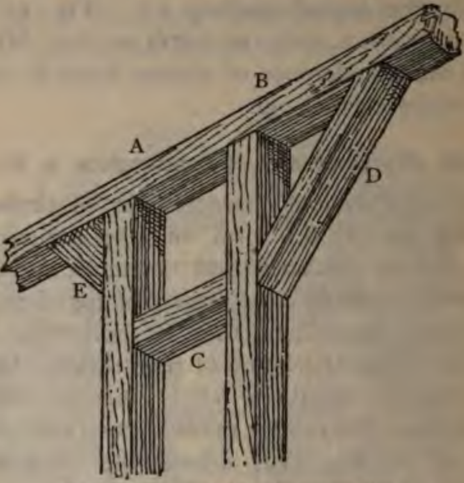

FIG. 12.—Diagram of Timber-construction.

a diagonal member securing lateral rigidity. The ordinary construction of our household furniture will serve for illustration.

§ 147. These characteristics appear in the forms of the Greek Temple.

Now the columned façade of the Greek temple (see Plate III) exhibits exactly this same system of structure *petrified*, with certain modifications due to an apt sense of the characteristics of the substituted material. In actual timber construction, where long beams are easily to be had and where the material is extremely tough and resisting, the supports are placed far apart, and are joined by lengthy horizontals; and some early temple porticoes in Greece, like that of the Heræum at Olympia, preserve this arrangement. In employing stone however, the Greeks soon came to realize the characteristics of the material, and altered the proportions of the parts in the direction of far greater massiveness, endeavouring thereby to secure that monumental aspect the tradition of which civilized architecture had inherited from the primeval past. Accordingly, in the fully developed Doric style, the columns are made extremely sturdy, and are placed so close together that the space between them is less than twice their lower diameter. The object is that they shall not only support the weight above, but *proclaim that they are doing so with a superabundance of power*, and this is carried so far that according to Boetticher all known Doric columns are thicker by at least one-fourth than was needful for accomplishing the work required.[1] In their form they carry out the same artistic intention. The question of the *origin* of the fluting of the shaft is an extremely puzzling one, but there is no doubt that its artistic use is to emphasise the upright character of the column by accentuating through repetition its outline (compare § 125). The entasis of the column has also been much discussed, but it is sufficient for our purpose to note that the slight outward swell of the tapering lines which bound the shaft (recalling perhaps the rounded forms of organized living creatures) conveys an impression of the fulness of life and energy highly conducive to the effect desired. The thinning of the shaft above hints at a fixed limit of height, which no mere cylinder would suggest, and when we have arrived at this we are prepared for the transition to the upper horizontal members. The square slab or abacus on the top of the column, with its projecting surface, is evidently destined to embrace and receive the superincumbent weight, but between it and the shaft occurs the rounded form of the echinus. This is again a fertile theme of controversy, but it may be suitably regarded as an example of a diagonal form filling up the corner between the upright and the horizontal according to a common construction in woodwork (E, Fig. 12). This explanation is borne out by the appearance throughout the building of such transitional forms wherever there is a meeting of vertical with horizontal planes. The corner is everywhere occupied by a moulding with curved profile, that may have had constructive significance in woodwork, but has none in stone, and is used in stone partly as a reminiscence, partly for artistic reasons to soften the sharp transition from one plane to another, or from *support* to *weight*. Above the abacus we find the horizontal beams of the architrave. These in strict logic complete the scheme of construction, and in the Egyptian portico are followed immediately by the slabs of the ceiling and the cornice. To the Greek eye however there was a want of due proportion between the lofty and massive supports and the shallow architrave, and to restore the balance an additional story, so to say, was added, lifting the cornice to a higher level and forming an entablature correspondent to the mass of the supports. This extra story is the frieze, in the Doric order formed of triglyphs, or short upright pillars, fluted or rather grooved in a way that reminds us of the column-shaft below. These pillars carry the cornice, just as the columns below carry the architrave; the intermediate spaces, called metopes, being filled in with slabs (see Plate III). The curious forms of the regulæ below the string course, with their 'drops' or peg-heads, which obviously originated in wood construction, are now employed in connection with the triglyphs, to prepare the eye for these before it passes the dividing line between architrave and frieze, and so to prevent the too absolute separation of the two divisions of the entablature.

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[1] *Die Tektonik der Hellenen*, 2te Aufl., Berlin, 1874, I. p. 10.

Above the frieze comes the boldly projecting cornice reminding us of the eaves of a timber roof. The entablature presents however other features of more special interest to our purpose. These are the moulded string-courses—projecting strips of stonework running the whole length of the elevation, marking off the architrave from the frieze, the frieze from the cornice, and dividing the latter in the direction of its length. The string-course may be quite plain, square on section as is the band between the architrave and frieze on the Doric entablature; or the profile of it may be moulded, so that part projects and catches the light, part is worked into a hollow the concavity of which produces a line of shadow. This indispensable feature in the artistic effect of the elevation is probably another of the debts that stone architecture owes to wood. It is a very natural carpenter's form, and is developed readily from the use of material that extends to great length in one direction. So easily are mouldings made out of wood, that miles of them, profiled in every conceivable manner, are issued every week out of the planing-mills for use in interior fittings. The long thin continuous line is not in accordance with the natural genius of stonework, which expresses itself rather in 'bossy' treatment of single blocks, as in the so-called rustic work. It has however been pointed out by a friendly critic that in stone building flat bonding-courses of masonry (or tiling) are of common occurrence (notably in Roman technique), and these may have been the origin of the moulded string-course. Theoretically this is true, but in architectural chronology the earliest appearance of the feature points strongly to the wooden origin here claimed for it.

§ 148. Significance of the foregoing facts.

The foregoing will justify, it is believed, the view enunciated earlier in this chapter, that the beauty of architecture is based on construction, but is by no means in a slavish relation thereto. The forms used by the Doric builders are in some cases mainly constructive, in others mainly artistic, or they have equal significance from either point of view. The classical façade is a standard for architects of all time because all the parts have a reason and are in an organic relation each to each. They all possess what Boetticher in his *Tektonik* happily terms a 'work-form' and an 'art-form,' the former consisting in a general shape and body of material adequate for the work to be performed; the latter in a studied contour, in details, and in ornament, which are not only pleasing to the eye but are significant of the functions and interdependence of the forms so treated. The work-form of the column is just so many cubic feet of stone in the shape of a support, the art-form comprises the increase of mass; the tapering, entasis, fluting of the shaft, by which it becomes so expressive of its use; and the echinus and abacus of the capital by which is emphasised the all-important relation of the support to the weight which rests above.

§ 149. Use of the forms thus established, as Conventions, in later Architecture, as in Roman and Neoclassic work;

The forms thus constituted became standard forms in ancient, and later on also in modern, architecture, and were taken up again and used in other connections where they were without constructive significance, becoming in the process, if we like to use the term, doubly and trebly shams. This was done even by the Greeks. The free standing column whether of stone or wood is an intelligible building form doing just what it pretends to do, but the column embedded in a wall or mass and becoming a half-column has no constructive significance (except in so far as it may strengthen the wall as a buttress); yet the Greeks themselves did not hesitate to employ it in this connection when occasion seemed to require, as on the monument known as the Lion Tomb, at Cnidus (Fig. 13), where the restoration worked out by Sir Charles Newton and Mr. Pullan shows a Doric façade embedded so to say in the solid mass of masonry of the monument.[1]

Other branches of the Greco-Italian stock followed the same fashion, and we find the Romans bringing the column and architrave in this way into connection, not only with the wall, but the wall broken by arched openings. The colonnade was just as much the normal and universal form for the architectural elevation in Italy as it was in Greece, .and it was in the columned style that the Old Italians constructed their temples, the only public buildings of importance in their early cities. As we have already seen, the arch was only used by the Romans till the Imperial Age on a limited scale and in an engineering rather than an architectural spirit. They had no idea that it could be so treated as to constitute by itself an architectural façade, as it was treated by the architects of the Italian Renaissance. An elevation without the essential column and architrave was to them hardly possible. Hence when constructive reasons compelled the use of the arch (as was the case in massive substructures supporting the seats of a theatre or amphitheatre, where its weight-carrying capacity was desirable), it was suffered to make its appearance on the vation *behind* the orthodox scheme of column d architrave, which thus becomes—to our eyes t not to those of the ancients—a sort of arti- al screen masking the real construction behind g. 14). To speak of this scheme as if it e borrowed from the Greeks as a frontispiece

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[1] Newton, *Discoveries at Halicarnassus*, Lond. 1863, II. p. 480 ff.

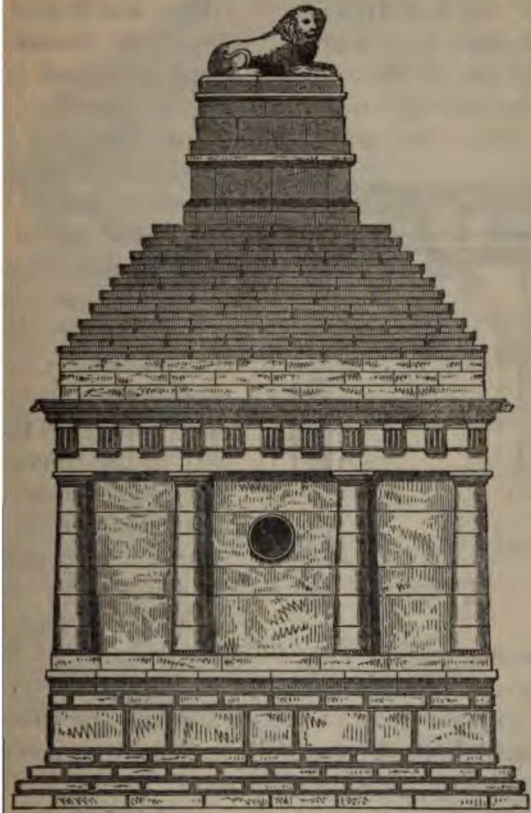

FIG. 13.—The Lion-Tomb, Cnidus.

to a piece of native construction, is to ignore the true place of trabeate construction in the architecture of all the Mediterranean peoples. It is as much native at Rome as at Athens, and if used as frontispiece to a mass of masonry in Greece, it might just as naturally be found embedded in a wall broken with arched openings at Rome. In a somewhat more artificial spirit we find that the architects of the Renaissance, and of the neo-classic period in more recent times, adopted these forms of the column, half-column, pilaster, base, capital, frieze and cornice, and used them with little constructive significance, as elements in the architectural composition at which they were aiming. Among the Florentine palaces of the fifteenth century, in which Renaissance architecture found its earliest complete expression, there are some where the effect is produced solely by the wall pierced with openings and suitably based and crowned (see Plate VI) and others where these classical fetaures are introduced as artistic aids to composition. The façade of the Palazzo Rucellai, Florence, by Leon Battista Alberti, is a good example (Plate IX). In Wren's work in London, and in that of Adam and

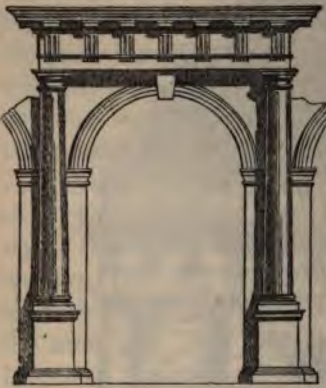
FIG. 14.—Roman combination of arched and trabeate forms.

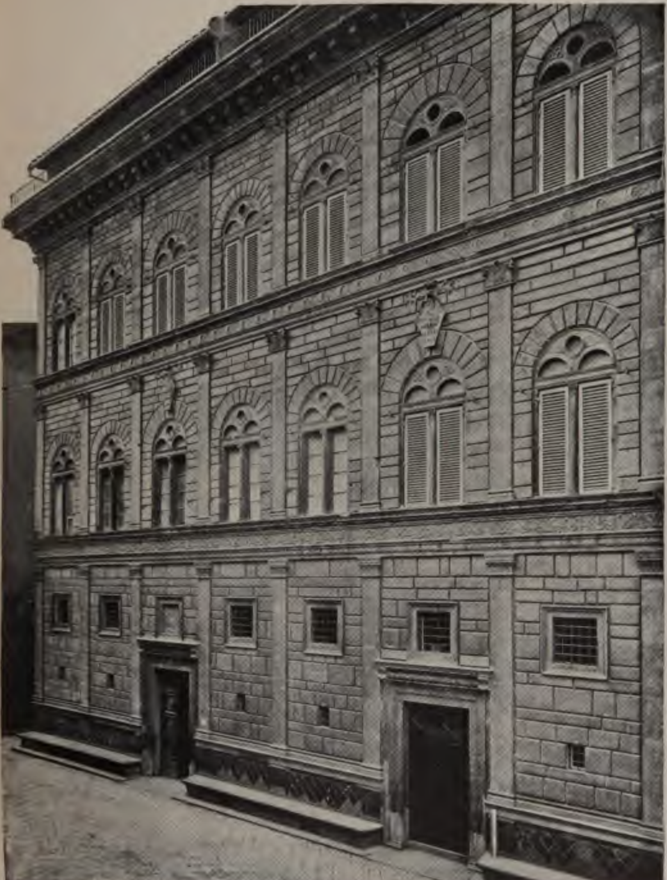

PLATE IX. To face p. 318.
Palazzo Rucellai, Florence.

Playfair in Edinburgh, such features are frankly employed for dividing and uniting purposes, and are valuable elements in those fine effects of proportion over which these designers had such notable mastery. Much has been said against the use of these forms, but as a rule the critics have been already prejudiced in favour of other styles, and have had no eyes for the sober dignity of classical compositions. It need hardly be said that those who are specially enamoured of the picturesque irregularity of medieval buildings are not fair judges of a style that depends so largely for its effect on regularity and repetition, and on a symmetrical relation of the wings of a composition to the centre. Unless we are prepared to sweep away all neo-classic architecture from the fifteenth century downwards (which is a position that only some ultra-medievalists would dream of adopting) we must admit that a just and tasteful employment of conventional forms for artistic purposes, without any too strict dependence upon construction, is a legitimate branch of the work of the modern architect.

§ 150. and even in the Gothic Style.

For this free treatment of architectural forms there is ample justification to be found in the very style which is the special admiration of the purists. In Gothic architecture these old classical forms are still to a great extent employed, but in the main as accessories, so that we do not feel that any contradiction exists—as in Roman work—between the arched and the trabeate forms. The slender pillars which carry the weight of the vault to the ground are moulded into the form of half-columns terminating in capitals, while a moulded base, the lineal descendant of the classical Ionic base, invariably occurs below the shaft or group of shafts forming the main pier of the structure. A reminiscence of the old days when the Early Christian church (out of which the Gothic edifice was evolved) was a columned structure without any vaulting, occurs in the moulded capital under the main arch dividing nave from aisles; and columns with bases and capitals, decoratively employed, are common features of Gothic buildings, thus serving as additional proof how sound was the work done by the Greeks in evolving and perfecting these standard forms.

§ 151. The Gothic Moulding as, in part, a conventional form.

In the case however of the Moulding, we find a form largely conventional used as a very essential element of artistic effect, and by no means as an accessory. There is indeed no element of effect more relied on by the Gothic builders than the moulding. It is used, first, for purposes of enrichment, through the multiplication of parallel lines of light-and-shade, as in archivolts, bases, vaulting ribs and the like, in the manner explained in § 125. It is used, next, to secure long horizontal lines to contrast with the predominant verticals so characteristic of the style. In the composition of a Gothic exterior, the projecting buttresses, the pinnacles, the window jambs and mullions, stand like sheaves of upright forms incessantly carrying the eye from the base to the higher stories. To express the unity of the ground plan of the building as a connected whole, these upright sheaves have to be bound together by corresponding horizontals, in the form of bases and string-courses. The artistic value of these features is inestimable, but they have only in certain cases a motive in construction. For example, on the exterior elevation, the drip or hood-moulding is motived by the need of preserving the wall below from the action of the rain, and its undercutting, which produces an effective line of shadow, is designed to check the downward course of the clinging moisture. The projecting cornice is motived in the same manner, but it would be stretching the theory of the logical character of Gothic too far to pretend to find constructive reasons for anything like all the mouldings employed in a thirteenth-century edifice. The same hood-moulding used in an interior, though an excellent finish to an arch, has not the same reason for existence as on an exterior. These features are indeed in many cases to be regarded in the same light as the columns and pilasters, being conventional forms handed down from classical times, and employed as artistic aids towards the production of a harmonious and significant artistic unity.

§ 152. Comparison of the Early Christian Basilica with the later Medieval Church

It may be useful in concluding this chapter to glance once again at the Gothic church as a

whole, from the point of view which has here been maintained. A comparison of it with the parent-form of the Early Christian basilica, makes clear at once some of the most important truths about architecture as an art—truths the most significant portion of which is hidden from the votaries of 'respect absolu pour le vrai.' So far as utility and convenience were concerned, a building of the form of Sta. Sabina or San Paolo at Rome was exactly suitable for the needs of a Christian congregation assembled for worship, and those architects and critics who insist that, if these paramount claims be provided for, the design will thereby receive all the artistic character it needs, should be satisfied with the simple and practical basilica. But whatever may be the views of those modern architects who are half-ashamed of being artists, it is certain that the early medieval builders themselves were not so easily satisfied, but made the basilica the starting-point of an architectural development, from which was finally to be evolved the costly and complicated structure of the thirteenth century. It is true that the introduction of stone-vaulting made a momentous break in the even course of evolution, and the Gothic designers deserve all the credit they have ever received for their clear and consistent application of the new constructive forms. In many other respects however, the great cathedrals only carry out with more elaboration those artistic modifications of structure which were begun in the time of Charles the Great, or at a still earlier period. The design of the basilicas of Rome and Ravenna has only one feature of pronounced architectural character—the great apse in which the interior terminates. For the rest, they are mere *buildings.* The walls within and without are flat and unbroken, the doors and windows little more than gaps, the archivolts of the nave arcades plain and unmoulded, the different parts of the edifice unconnected by any relations of proportion. It was the work of the early medieval builders to reduce the plan to a consistent scheme, and to bind organically part to part; to make the portals significant in form and proportion and rich in membering and ornament; to balance constructive verticals by horizontal string-courses, and to enrich these by moulded profiles and reduplication of lines and light-and-shade. To all this the artists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries went on to add a vastness and complexity of mass and of detail of which the earlier builders had never dreamed, to multiply forms but to control their working through largely-designed guiding lines, and by these to lead the eye easily on from point to point, till it should be able to grasp the whole mighty complexus as a single ordered work of art.

CHAPTER II

THE CONVENTIONS OF SCULPTURE

§ 153. Sculpture in the Round begins with Realism: examples from Egypt

IN approaching the subject of sculpture we have to remember the distinction already drawn between work in the round and sculpture in the different forms of relief. The latter, as we have seen, is not purely plastic, but partakes somewhat of the nature of the graphic art, and obeys conventions of its own that will be noticed in their place. For the moment it is only with the former that we are concerned.

Sculpture in the round is, in its inception, the most imitative of the arts of form. A plastic work represents the solid thing as solid. It does not imitate form, it is form, and proves itself such by the test of touch as well as by the eye. It is not wonderful therefore that, in the earlier stages of the development of the art, imitation of a crude and direct kind was the prevailing characteristic. Owing to his use of all the dimensions of space, the sculptor is in certain respects always bound to follow nature closely, and at first he was pressed to carry that imitation to the furthest possible limit. Nor was his task a difficult one. His art is at first comparatively easy, far easier than the sister art of painting, and he was able to attain extraordinary success in imitative work at a very early period in artistic history. How great was this success we see when we turn to the earliest important works of sculpture known to us, the commemorative statues of the Egyptian dead of the Old Empire. These have come down to us in considerable numbers from the age of the Pyramids, and are mostly preserved in the museum of Ghizeh, near Cairo, though some fine examples are enshrined in the Louvre. The British Museum is not so fortunate.

These figures were connected in their origin with Egyptian beliefs about immortality, and were designed to preserve to all time the outward lineaments of the departed, who, even if his embalmed body decayed or were destroyed, would still live on in his effigy. With this purpose the work had to be made as life-like as possible, and the Egyptian artists carried out their task with a skill little short of marvellous. Not only were there statues of the deceased person himself—who was always one of the upper class, for only great people had separate tombs and statues—but also of his retainers, who surrounded him in the tomb chamber in effigy as they had attended him in life. A statue of this kind meets us in the Egyptian gallery on the first floor at the Louvre (Plate X).

It is that of a scribe who squats tailor-fashion, with scroll and stylus on his knee, and raises his head attentive for the words which his lord or his fellow-officer is ready to dictate to him. It is not a statue, it is the man. Intelligence beams in the countenance. A character can be read in the alert but shrewd and cautious aspect. He is one who knows his value, but is mindful first of his place and office, and is all upon his business. We shake hands across the millenniums with this essentially human personage, a man such as we know and respect to-day, and he is so living before us that we half expect to see him lower his head to inscribe on his tablets some record of farm produce or item of the household accounts of a chamberlain of Pepi or of Teta. If a look of life were all that is desired in the plastic representation, the Egyptians had mastered the sculptor's art. As a matter of fact however, it was only when the limits of this raw imitation were reached that the real problem of the art presented itself. When sculpture came to a knowledge of itself this easy achievement of its early prime no longer satisfied. Such praise as crudely exact imitation can readily secure from the vulgar was discarded. A more or less artificial standard constituted by a refined æsthetical feeling was set up, and certain CONVENTIONS OF SCULPTURE were elevated into an unwritten law of the plastic art.

§ 154. The Greeks established Conventions of the Art.

The study of these conventions forms the subject of the present chapter. In attempting

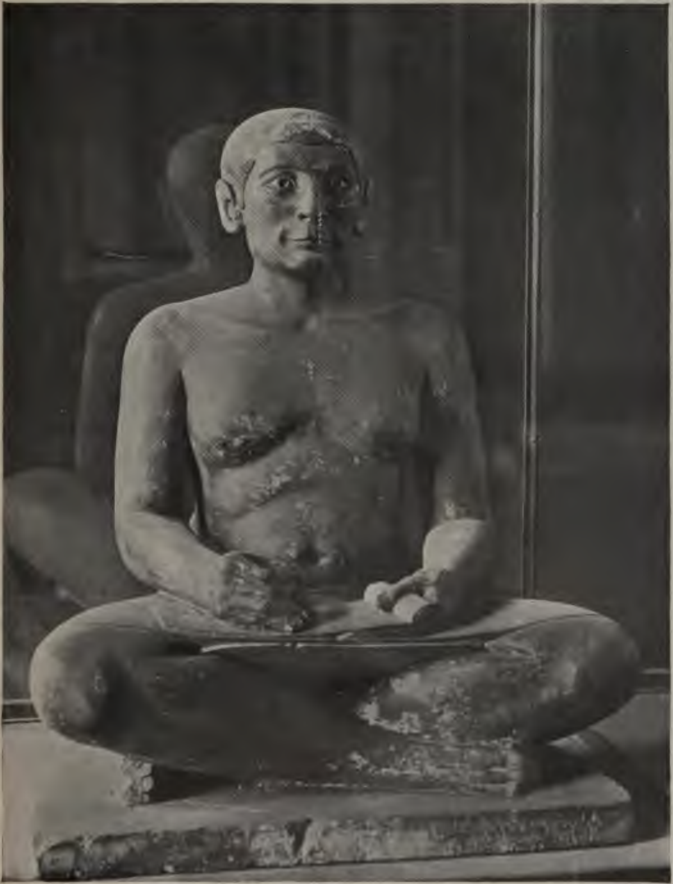

PLATE X. To face p. 326.

Seated Scribe, an Egyptian statue of the Old Empire, in the Louvre.

to formulate them reliance must be placed chiefly, though not entirely, on Hellenic practice, for the work of the Greeks occupies in relation to sculpture as a whole a unique position of supremacy. In no one of the other arts of form do we possess so universally recognized a standard. Architecture culminated at two distinct periods, in two buildings markedly different in technical and æsthetic qualities, the Hellenic Temple and the Cathedral of the thirteenth century. Painting has had its two heroic ages—the sixteenth century in Italy and the seventeenth century in Spain and the Netherlands. Hence there are naturally partisans on the one side and on the other, of classical or Gothic architecture, of Raphael or of Rembrandt, and these have at different epochs drawn the artistic public into opposing camps. In the use of sculpture the consensus of opinion which gives the Greeks their position of supremacy has been practically unbroken, and in consequence discussions on sculpture tend to revolve round Hellenic procedure.

§ 155. The value of Greek Standards for modern practice.

It is one thing to recognize the value of the standard thus obtained, but it is quite another thing to attempt to derive therefrom any rigid code of rules for the art. Neither the practice nor the criticism of sculpture is so easy a matter. The art has its Italian and its modern periods, as well as its classical period, and in both of these it has betrayed fresh aspirations which have at times carried it far beyond the traditions of the antique. The truth is that in sculpture, as in the other arts, obedience to the letter is death. Art lives because the genius of changing ages or of individuals is for ever vitalizing tradition, and introducing new principles of growth. The secret of success in art is so to blend the old and the new as to obtain the full value of both indispensable elements. Upon Greek practice has been established the general body of those conventions of sculpture on which the tradition of the art is based. In so far as such conventions follow from the essential principles of the art itself, they are of universal validity; in so far as they represent the particular Hellenic reading of those principles they are only of validity because, as a fact, they led to the most accomplished practice of the art which the world has seen. To deviate from them may be perilous, but to deviate and yet succeed is the prerogative of genius.

In dealing then with the subject before us the following caution will be necessary. It is the main object of this chapter to formulate the principles of sculpture as they can be deduced from the nature of the art itself, and from the practice of the Greek masters so far as they expressed themselves in freedom. But at the same time, let us remember that, just because the Greeks are recognized as our examples, we must be sure that what we adduce as exemplary is really Greek. In other words, let us acknowledge that we come across from time to time certain elements in Greek practice which do not represent the free choice of the artist, but are due rather to special religious or social conditions, or had remained as survivals from more primitive epochs of the art. The most important of these elements is, perhaps, the use of colour, the character and extent of which we have already sufficiently discussed. Finally, we should take into account those modifications in sculpturesque practice which naturally and legitimately follow from the changed conditions under which the art has been, and will be, practised in the modern world.

§ 156. The primary Conventions of monumental Sculpture.

We have already glanced at sculpture as the expression in a permanent form of those feelings which find their first spontaneous outcome in the festival. The art has indeed come before us under three aspects; first, as decorative, in its function of supplying permanent adornment of a significant kind to the festal structure; next, as perpetuating in a lasting and concentrated shape the beautiful and expressive movements of the human figure in the dance; thirdly, as embodying in plastic form the popular conceptions of the deities and other personages who peopled the Hellenic world. In fulfilling these functions sculpture is not merely representative, but commemorative. It imitates nature, but imitates not only to perpetuate but to exalt its subject. This character belonged to all the more important works of plastic art in the ancient world, and upon it depend many of their most striking qualities.

Certain characteristics, following from the very nature of the art, must necessarily belong to plastic works in the round, but these characteristics are heightened when the work has a monumental intent. Thus, the mere fact that sculpture in the round is the representation of material objects in all their three dimensions, carries with it the consequence that every part must be clearly shown and be as accessible to the touch as to the sight, and from this material necessity it follows as a kind of primary canon of the art that *only those objects can be suitably represented in sculpture which have a certain intrinsic interest and importance.* There would be something irrational in an artist spending his skill in the display, and in a sense the exaltation, of what is not worth showing. The painter may charm us with the mere suggestion of objects under a veil of colour or in some poetic effect of light, and in such a case the objects in themselves matter nothing, but the sculptor has very little of this magic at his command. He can, as we shall see, when working in relief, compass something of the effect of suggestion by a studied indefiniteness of modelling, but when working in the round he has not got to *suggest* but to *show*, and the qualities which make his subject æsthetically attractive must be of an intrinsic and not an accidental kind. It is true that at different epochs, both in ancient and modern times, a freer or more severe view has been taken of the range of subjects suited for plastic treatment, but this range has always been greatly circumscribed when compared for example with that open to the painter, and has never really included more than the human form and that of some of the higher animals, with inanimate objects introduced merely as subordinate accessories. To put it briefly, the subjects of sculpture in the round have always possessed one at least of the two characteristics ascribed by Cicero to the Beautiful, 'Dignity' or 'Grace.'[1]

In the case of Greek work, which was in the main of a monumental or commemorative kind, the prevailing quality was 'Dignitas,' though this did not exclude the complementary quality of 'Venustas' or grace, related to the other, so Cicero tells us, as the feminine to the masculine. Now the Dignitas of Greek sculpture depended in the main on the three closely related qualities of imposing mass, inherent nobility of subject, and studied beauty in form and composition. These were qualities however, not merely following as consequences from the very nature of sculpture in the round, but conditioned by the whole attitude of the Greeks towards art, and by the place that sculpture occupied in the Hellenic world. A preceding chapter has dealt with the subject of the nature and the constitution of the themes of Greek sculpture, and it need only be said here in brief that the Greeks followed out to its extremest consequence the canon of their art above noticed, and exacted not only *a certain* but *the utmost* interest and importance in their subjects, and enhanced by every possible artifice the impression of Dignity and Grace produced by their works. Wherever in later times the antique has been known it has been studied as the source and inspiration of these qualities, and though there have been schools of sculpture, as in the France of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that have developed in comparative, though never in complete, independence of the antique, their best works, however exquisite in design and feeling, are never carried so far in the directions indicated as the masterpieces of the Hellenic chisel.

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[1] *De Officiis*, i. c. 36.

§ 157. Treatment in monumental work as influenced by Material and Scale.

To resume then. Palpable grandeur of mass, inherent dignity in subject, and loveliness of contour are the three essentials for sculpture as understood by the Greeks, and these really follow as corollaries from the original axiom, that the themes of an art which represents everything clearly and in a position of distinction, should have interest and importance in themselves. Let us now go on to consider how these requirements are met by the sculpturesque handling of material.

The question of actual size leads naturally to a consideration of materials and technical processes, foreign to the purpose of this chapter. It may be said briefly that there is practically no limit to the dimensions of a figure in ordinary stone, for this may be hewn by a Deinocrates out of a vast mountain, or be cut in the face of a cliff like the figures of Ramses at Abou Simbul. Flawless blocks of fine marble, on the other hand, can only be obtained of limited size, and this is markedly the case with the finest of all statuary marbles, the so-called 'Lychnites' from Paros. The block from which the Hermes by Praxiteles was hewn, measuring about 8 ft. by 5 ft. by 3 ft., was of exceptional dimensions.[1] The Venus of Milo in the Louvre is in two pieces, but a join in a marble statue is as far as possible to be avoided. It is probable that the David of Michelangelo is as large as any single figure wrought in fine marble by the ancients. Where bronze is the material employed, very large castings are technically difficult, and the lower half of the great figure of Germania, cast some years ago in Munich, was claimed to be the largest known single casting in the world. On the other hand, if cast in separate sections, like the famous Colossus of Rhodes, a gigantic work might conceivably be built up in bronze. In ancient times colossal figures were often constructed of timber with an external coating of metal plates beaten into the desired form, or inlays of ivory; or again, the beaten metal plates were riveted together without any wooden framework, and this process has again recently been adopted in the case of Bartholdi's huge figure of Liberty for New York.

Whatever be the process of execution, it is clear that sculpturesque treatment will vary with the size as it will vary with the position and monumental character of the work. It is a physical necessity that a large figure must always in part be remote from the eye: as a work of this kind is made for public show, and can only be effectively seen as a whole from a certain distance, it will demand for its proper effect a lofty pedestal which gives it due prominence and value, but removes it still further from the spectator. As a consequence of this it will often happen that some change is demanded in the normal proportion of the parts, and we learn from Vasari that Donatello made a special study of this point, which would naturally present itself in connection with the then new study of perspective.[1] It is remarked by Eastlake that the 'Nod' of the Olympian Zeus of Pheidias was intended to bring the face more into the direct line of the spectator's sight.[2] Plato in the *Sophist* refers to the practice of the sculptors of his time in altering the proportions of figures of any magnitude, lest 'if the true proportions were given the upper part which is further off would appear to be out of proportion in comparison with the lower which is nearer.'[3]

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[1] Lepsius, Griechische Marmorstudien, in *Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie*, 1890. The writer accepts the old derivation of Lychnites from λύχνος a lamp, the material being quarried underground.

These modifications in treatment include also (1) *composition in an architectural spirit*, (2) *omission of needless details*, (3) *simplification of masses.* In composing a group for distant effect, the statuary must think first of all of his masses without troubling himself about the subject represented by each. In so doing he will be treating his work like an architect, and will be concerned first with questions of proportion and balance, rather than with suitableness of action or truth to nature. Further, when a work has this architectural character and is meant to be seen all round, it should retain a certain similarity of aspect from all sides, and this necessitates symmetry in composition. Whatever be the shape of the figure or group, absolute stability is essential, and this question of stability, always of importance in exposed figures or groups, is largely one of material. With a material like marble, both specifically heavy and brittle, great care has to be taken to provide sufficient support below for the superstructure. A single standing figure in the nude, or a man on horseback, will have the whole weight of the torso, or of the body of the steed with its rider, upborne on supports which in their weakest point only contain the material of a pair of slender ankles or a horse's four pastern-joints. This is not enough to ensure the safety of a marble figure in course of removal, or even under wind pressure in an exposed situation. Hence all sorts of devices are adopted to strengthen the lower portion of such figures by introducing accessories like stumps of trees or falling drapery, boxes of scrolls, little attendant cupids, animals and the like. The choice of such accessories gives opportunity for the exercise of taste and leads sometimes to the addition of significant motives, such as the dolphin which curls up its tail by the side of the sea-born Venus (de' Medici) at Florence. But they tend necessarily to complicate the forms with which they are associated, and militate against the simplification of masses just spoken of.[1]

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[1] *Opere*, I. p. 150, *Introduzione, della Scultura*, c. i.

[2] *Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts*, London, 1848, I. p. 77.

[3] P. 236.

When however the material is bronze, or even wood, the case is very different. The strength of the latter in resisting fracture across the grain is far greater in proportion to its weight than that of marble, while in the case of bronze the material is not used solid, but hollow, so that it is possible to cast the superstructure—the body of horse or man—very thin, while the use of more material in the supports gives them the solidity required. Bronze used in the way just indicated represents in truth the actual material of the living body, the large masses of which in the trunk are more or less hollow, while in the slender supports are concentrated all the strength and toughness of bone and ligament and sinew.

From these considerations it follows that for the monumental works under consideration, by far the most suitable material is bronze, which was in fact the normal, though not the exclusive, material of the Greek statuary for works in the open air.[2]

The use of bronze leads at once to certain peculiarities of treatment always finely observed by the ancients. The dark hue of this, when oxidized by exposure to the air, precludes the effect of internal detail, while it makes the outline tell out in silhouette with startling distinctness. If at a distance the forms so seen are to proclaim their story clearly, it is of immense advantage to get rid of any needless accessory and to disembarrass them as much as possible; every line can thus be made to tell, when such only are introduced which have actual relation to the organized structure. The composition of such a work demands the highest efforts of the statuary's skill, and a consummate knowledge of the essentials rather than the ornamental accessories of his craft. Clearness, gained by simplification, is the first essential, and unless this be secured it is of but little avail to insist on searching imitation of nature, or richness of interior markings. Nature, it is true, supplies the main organic structure and the action, and these are to be rendered with the utmost distinctness and force; but unless the fine composition give to the whole, at the first glance, an artistic significance, the most praiseworthy efforts after truth are only thrown away.

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[1] In cases where a bronze original has afterwards been copied in marble, as was often the case in ancient times, supports have been added to counteract the more brittle nature of the stone; as for instance the support under the arm of the Apoxyomenos (athlete using the strigil) in the Vatican (see Plate XIII).

[2] The Niké of Pæonios at Olympia, and the Niké from Samothrace in the Louvre, are striking examples of a bold composition in marble when the subject would have suggested bronze.

An excellent opportunity for the study of this point of sculpturesque treatment is to be found at Berlin, where aloft on the four corners of the old museum in the Königsplatz there stand four large groups in bronze. Two are reproductions in bronze of the famous horse tamers or 'Castor and Pollux' from the Quirinal at Rome (the originals are of dark marble), and two are bronze equestrian groups by excellent German sculptors of the last generation. The contrast in effect is most marked. The antique groups tell out with perfect clearness against the sky from any point of a pretty wide circuit, and the contours are both beautiful and intelligible, while the modern works, though good examples of their time and school, are confused masses in which the eye can distinguish neither action nor composition. It is unfortunate that no great classical monument in bronze has come down to us from the finest period of the art, but the Renaissance produced, in Verrocchio's equestrian statue to Colleoni at Venice, an unsurpassable masterpiece of the monumental style we are here considering.

This statue (Plate XI) honours Bartolommeo Colleoni, lord of Bergamo, the captain-general of the forces of the Venetian republic, and seems to represent him advancing at the head of his men-at-arms, while watching in vigilance for the moment when he shall give the signal to charge. The pedestal, so important an element in the monumental effect of statuary, is justly proportioned to the effigy, which is placed upon it so far to the front that there is a sense of forward movement without any hint of insecurity. Man and horse are as one; the embodiment of irresistible force held severely in reserve. The horse, the noblest representative of his own ponderous type in art, was studied by Dürer for his Knight and Death, and the suggestion of the measured earth-shaking tread of the creature is not less impressive than the gaze of the impassioned rider as he glares from under the shadow of his helm.

> 'In close fight a champion grim,
> In camps a leader sage,'

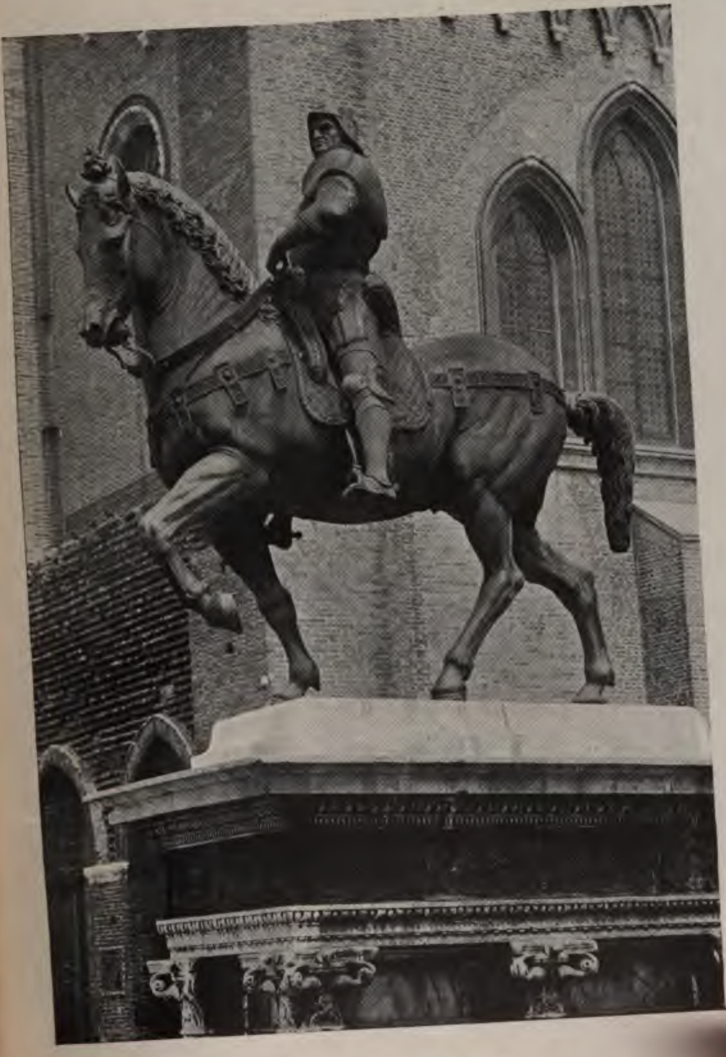

PLATE XI. To face p. 338.

Equestrian Statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni at Venice.

he reveals his personality at a flash to the same glance that has taken in as a whole the clear and satisfying composition. The work illustrates sculpturesque treatment in detail as finely as it does the quality of general effectiveness, but it is with this alone that we are for the moment concerned.

§ 158. Conventions of Treatment in works designed for a nearer view: the handling of Bronze and Marble.

The austere feeling of simple and massive compositions of this kind was carried by the Greeks through all their works in the round, which are always architecturally disposed and rendered with that breadth which in artistic treatment makes for greatness. Nevertheless there are points of treatment of a more intimate kind that apply rather to works intended for a closer view in interiors than to the out-of-door monument. We will continue this study of the main conventions of sculpture with especial reference to these. Here again there are conventions depending on the varying colour and texture of materials. Bronze and marble, the two standard materials for sculpture, differ as to these in the most marked manner. The one is dark and opaque, the other light-coloured and semi-transparent. On the former, delicate transitions of light-and-shade make no show, on the latter they may be exceedingly subtle and yet fully effective, while the light penetrating slightly the transparent texture of the stone gives a beautiful look of softness to the delicately rounded surface. Hence there are distinct styles of modelling suited for bronze and for marble; and the difference is as a rule noticeable in good Greek work though it is not always observed by moderns. The fact is that in modern times the statuary makes in every case a full-sized model of his complete work in clay, which is afterwards transferred by further processes into the permanent material. Whether this is destined to be bronze or marble, the modelling is actually done in the clay, so that it requires special consideration to secure a quality in it suitable either for the one or for the other. Ancient practice seems to have dispensed with the full-size clay model, so that after the main lines of the work had been well studied in a model on a small scale, an attack would be opened directly on the marble. Or if bronze was to be the material, a very common method of procedure was to build up the core of the work nearly to the full size in fire-clay and then to finish it with a skin of wax, which received all the surface details, and was probably something of the same hue as the metal that was ultimately to take its place. To this wax a style of finish was applied suitable for bronze, while in the other case the marble, as it was worked into shape, naturally acquired under the chisel its appropriate texture. Hence these differences of treatment in relation to material naturally bulk more largely in ancient practice than in modern and should always be looked for and studied, note being taken of the fact that bronze originals have often come down to us only in marble copies, so at we find indications of bronze treatment, though the material may actually be marble. Forms in marble are fuller, more delicately rounded, and blend more subtly together than in bronze, where we find instead a certain spareness and angularity. Further, as detail shows less clearly in the dark material, projections are emphasised and corners sharpened to give clearness to shadows. The line of the brow is sharp in bronze; the locks of hair are more distinct; the mass of hair over the forehead undercut to gain shadow.

§ 159. The Rendering of Natural Forms;

There follow to be noticed the methods or conventions adopted by the Greeks in the treatment of the subjects selected for sculpturesque rendering. 'Treatment' implies something 'treated,' and this is supplied to the sculptor by nature; the Greeks however never accepted anything from nature without in each case, by one and the same act, bringing it into relation with a scheme of artistic handling. Nature as such was not to the Greek sculptor an object of regard; but neither, on the other hand, was mere art, when out of relation to nature. No sculptor of sensibility can be indifferent to the freshness, the variety, the never-exhausted interest of the forms of nature, or fail to make an effort to transfer a part at any rate of the charm to his work. Hence we hardly know which to wonder at most in the Parthenon Marbles, their truth to nature or their superb artistic style. The broad treatment so apparent in the best works of the Greeks *did not* exclude the liveliest interest in nature, for we saw (§§ 116 f.) that true artistic breadth results, not from emptiness, but from the subduing and harmonizing of strong and telling elements. To understand Greek treatment in sculpture it will be necessary to consider for a moment what were these elements which nature in this way supplied.

In man and in the higher animals, the sculptor found, in the first place, organic forms endowed with functional activity and of exquisite and varying beauty of mass and contour, with the addition in the human countenance of emotional expression; and, next, in the one case clothing, and in the other fur or plumage, with the addition in both cases of trappings and ornaments. His opportunities for the study of the human figure both nude and draped we have already noted (§§ 26 f.) and have only to add that he was content to take nature broadly speaking as he found it, representing the figure nude or draped as it appeared nude or draped in real life, and taking thence also the cut and set of clothes. Thus the youthful athlete, or the god or hero of like age and personal habits, appears naked, the older man, or the more dignified god, draped in full robes. The female figure was draped in scenes of human life or on Olympus, except when the bath gave occasion for the laying aside of robes, or when Aphrodite is shown as the ocean-born goddess. Further, the fashion of the vestments is copied from nature. Vase-paintings and pictures at Herculaneum, Pompeii and Rome show a dress similar to that exhibited in sculpture, and there is no reason to suppose that the painters were in league with the statuaries to represent some artificial or conventional substitute for the dress really worn. Though there are considerable varieties in this dress, due not so much to its form as to diverse methods of wearing it, yet its essential character, in which it differs from modern costume, remains the same, and depends on the fact that it was made up without any cutting or sewing, simply by the folding and arrangement of a rectangular piece of cloth.

How did the human form present itself to the Greek sculptor? A bony framework consisting in the main of three hollow boxes or walled cavities, the skull, the thorax and the pelvis, joined by the flexible spine and giving attachment to the freely moving limbs, is covered with bundles of muscular fibres, acting dynamically in flexing and extending the spine or the extremities, but presenting themselves to the eye as more or less rounded cushions covering the angles of the skeleton, and in flatter masses clothing the trunk and limbs and joining with elastic tissue one rigid part to another. Every movement of the skeleton is due to the activity of some of these bundles of fibres exerting their pull by an act of contraction, which thickens them in the middle by so much as their extremities or attachments are drawn nearer together. At these extremities the soft fibres run together and are contracted and hardened into sinews or tendons, lengthened sometimes, as in the front of the forearm, into cords which appear tense *beneath the skin* when the muscle is in action. Clothing these muscular masses, and filling in to a great extent the divisions between the bundles of fibres composing them, is the softer fatty structure or adipose tissue, while the superficial veins, branching in a network over the surface, swell or fall according to the pressure in them of the blood. The hair on head or chin is of shifting and uncertain texture, and of tone and tint more or less distinct from the skin.

And what were the elements offered for artistic treatment by Greek drapery? Folds—sharp, numerous and gracefully angular in thin materials, broad and rounded in those of thicker texture—with certain special features such as girdles, borders, buttons and clasps.

§ 160. and their artistic handling, as illustrated in the Parthenon Fragments.

To the subject of the Conventions of Sculpture belong various points in the artistic treatment of these forms, that are eminently characteristic of the work of the Greeks. They seem to have sought for contrasted elements in the materials thus offered by nature, in order that by playing one off against the other they might compass a higher beauty. These contrasted elements they found, first, in the forms of finely-folded drapery or crisply-curled and wavy locks, as against the rich, full masses of the nude (see § 126).

Next, in drapery itself, the thin under-tunic is contrasted with the outer robe of heavier material and plainer convolutions, and finally in the treatment of the flesh itself, a far harder matter, a sufficient use is made of the finer local markings which give animation to the surface in contrast to the main structural features of the form. Now it may seem a comparatively simple matter for a skilled statuary to represent so familiar and accessible a natural object as the human body, with general truth and with a specific accuracy in details that avoids at the same time any overminuteness tending to a sacrifice of breadth. Yet a little comparison of the Parthenon Marbles with other works of Greek sculpture open for study will show how extraordinarily rare, at any rate in extant work, is that combination of massive breadth with extreme sensitiveness and play of surface exhibited in the nudes of the Parthenon.

The Hermes of Praxiteles is useful for comparison. It is not, like so many extant antiques, only a copy from a lost original, but is a genuine first-hand work of one of the greatest Attic masters—though probably a work of his youth—and it dates about eighty years after the Parthenon. The head of Hermes is of the highest beauty, and for reasons to be afterwards given, represents an advance upon the heads of the earlier period, but the form itself, though perfect in pose and general contour, misses altogether the quality of surface best expressed by the word 'sensitiveness.' The impression given is rather that of a single substance of even texture under the skin than of substances so varied as rigid bone, firm but elastic cartilage, hardened or cord-like sinew passing off into bundles of fleshy fibres, soft filling in of *adipose* tissue, swelling and falling veins. Examine from this point of view the left shoulder and side of the Theseus (see Frontispiece), and note the distinctness and individuality of the forms of the muscular masses, as, for example, the deltoid muscle covering the shoulder, and the pectoral, with their stark angularity suggestive of active force; the flatness and spareness over the ribs where bone and cartilage lie close under the skin; the clear indication of the lobes of the serratus magnus muscle, which yet have each its own particular shape and direction, and the marked transition from these firmer and distincter forms to the soft abdominal portions below. Then compare all this with the uncharacteristic round cushion over the shoulder of the Hermes, the dough-like puffiness, and the general monotony of treatment over all the parts indicated. Or notice in the Ilyssus, how well the carver has grasped the difference between the comparatively rigid bony boxes of the thorax and the pelvis—themselves always remaining the same but changing their relative position through the flexure of the spine—and the elastic abdominal parts connecting them, which are pulled out of their normal position as the body turns. The muscular mass covering the left shoulder of the Poseidon torso is magnificent in its weight and breadth, and may be compared with the corresponding part on the more spare and athletic Theseus. In the human body the muscular fibres of the deltoid muscle are divided up into different bundles or fleshy lobes, and these divisions of the general mass are in the marble most tellingly characterized, while the

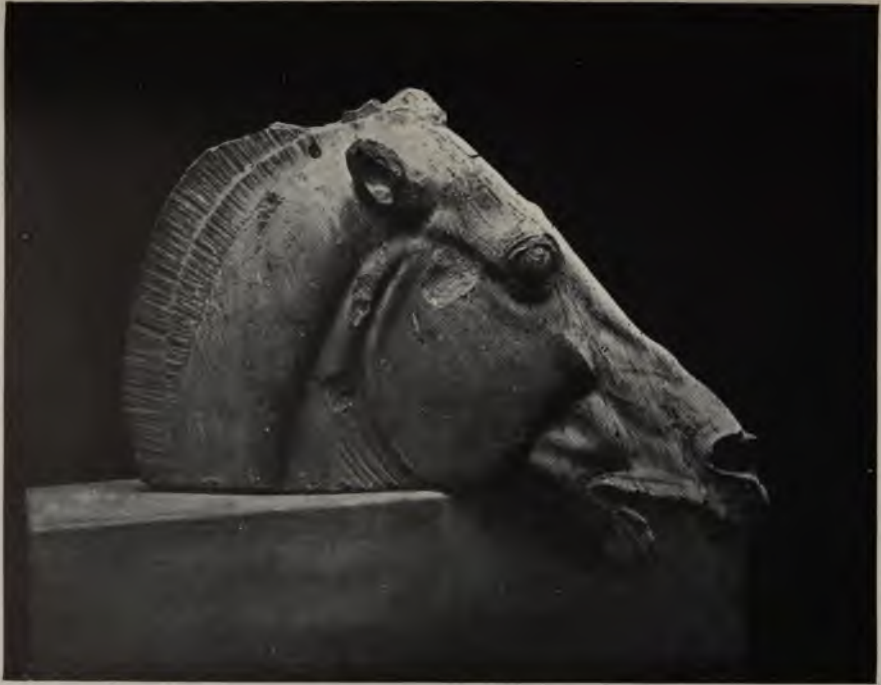

Plate XII. To face p. 346.

whole is fused into one broad general impression. In the head of the horse of Selene (Plate XII) remark the masterly treatment of sensitive fleshy parts about the nostril, quivering with life as the veins swell and fall with the rush and ebb of blood, in comparison with the flatness of the bony cheek, the rigidity and angular edge of which are accentuated for contrast.

Passing from the treatment of the nude to that of drapery, we are struck with the same incomparable truthfulness of rendering both in general forms and in details, combined with a tact in composition that never fails to secure the utmost possible artistic effect out of the given elements. The broadest aspect of drapery is that in which it serves to explain or emphasise action and assist the general expression of a figure. Thus, in large folds, suggesting a thick material and falling heavily about a form, it carries with it dignity, while, fluttering lightly around or above the person, it lends it grace and animation. Movement is shown by the parting skirt that reveals the knee or side, and by the mantle streaming in the wind. Drapery is also deftly turned to account in composition when forms have to be united by guiding lines. With a little ingenuity, folds of drapery can be made to look natural almost anywhere that they are wanted, and they may serve for support, as in the marble Niké of Pæonios, found at Olympia, or else to enclose, and hence simplify, broken masses so as to keep the eye from straying. We may further consider its use as an element in that contrast of richness with simplicity already referred to. The group known as the Fates from the Eastern Pediment of the Parthenon, especially the reclining figure nearest the angle, is in this respect 'classical.' To show how intimately in touch with nature were these Greek sculptors, it may be noticed that in the various draped female figures extant from the two pediments, there are all sorts of variety in the fashion of wearing clothes which the observant student will quickly recognize. In the reclining figure the robe is of thin material reaching to the feet and buckled down the arm so as to make a sleeve. It is girdled in at the waist with a round cord, and as it is slightly pulled up through the zone the doubled part falls over this again. The clasp which fastened the robe on the shoulder is however undone. Here again it would seem a simple matter enough to compose and copy folds of drapery, but no sculptor has ever made these so beautiful as on the torso of this figure. As a whole the crisp folds are intended to enhance by contrast the rounded masses of the mature womanly form, such as the right shoulder and largely moulded bosom, with the right knee of the supporting figure, which in their turn by their simple dignity of mass make more winningly exquisite the play of the delicate curves losing and finding themselves again over the surface of the drapery. In pure delight to the eye in composition of line, this group is unrivalled in art. The effect of the heavier mantle folded over the lower limbs is also finely studied, especially in its contrast with the thinner tissue of the underrobe, while if the student will take the pains to go round to the back of the figure—never destined to be seen when once it had left the master's workshop—he will find in the portion of drapery falling from the shin, and even that which lies over the flatly cut rock whereon the form reposes, a most masterly treatment of lines well worthy of admiration.

With regard now to the treatment of the hair, the headless condition of the Parthenon figures precludes any study from these of this particular detail, but we know enough to be sure that it was quietly treated, as was the case in all the works of the great period. The use of it corresponds as a rule to that made of the thin folds of drapery, and its contrast with the form is well exemplified in the lovely waving locks over the forehead of the Demeter from Cnidus in the British Museum, as well as in the Venus of Milo, where a tress falls with masterly effect between the smooth large shoulders of the noble creature. In the case of the mane or fell of the horse and the lion, it is noteworthy how restrained is the treatment in the finest period of Greek art. In the pediment sculptures, the mane of the horses of the Sun and of Selene, as well as that of the chariot horses of Athene (known only through Carrey's drawing) is barely indicated, and the same treatment occurs throughout the frieze. There is only one really flourishing tail among all the Centaurs of the metopes, and this is the one which is being whisked in triumph in metope No. 28. One of the noblest lion's manes in classical art is that which, severely conventionalized, clusters in short heavy locks round the head of that masterpiece of the monumental style, the lion from Cnidus in the Elgin room at the British Museum. The fact is, that the voluminous tangle of hair (favoured by some modern artists) is the cheapest possible method of securing a specious air of æsthetic interest for a figure. In his Zeus at Olympia, Pheidias avoided the temptation of emphasising the famous ambrosial locks of the god, and the head of the statue, as it appears upon a coin of Elis,[1] exhibits a quiet treatment of the hair that served but to throw into stronger relief that immortal brow, on which sat the present majesty of the king of gods and men.

§ 161. The general artistic result of these Conventions of Treatment.

The points of treatment that have been now briefly reviewed all combine to produce that monumental appearance, that 'indescribable remoteness and dignity' (§ 19) which is the primal effect of these masterpieces of ancient art. As a necessary condition of formal beauty (§§ 115 ff.) the masses are composed with a view to unity, but this bringing together of the lines is carried so far as to produce a distinct ethical impression. It results in the suggestion of *repose*, which becomes the most significant element in the effect of the works we are considering. Repose is often carried so far as to eliminate what the ordinary observer desiderates as 'expression.' One might imagine the Greeks feeling that any one emotion or desire if strongly accentuated would throw the figure, so to say, off its balance, and draw the interest of the spectator too much in one direction. Hence it was not emotion itself, but rather the capability for all noble emotion, that was represented in these generalized but pregnant shapes. We have already noted (§§ 39 ff.) that a large part of the interest of the great Greek statues is due to that refined characterization of the different types, which produced 'normal images' of the various divine beings peopling the Hellenic Pantheon. Here in the Parthenon Marbles the artistic genius of the people for once went beyond even this, and evolved types, not of this or that side of the human or divine nature, but rather of idealized humanity at large. The particular personages represented by the figures known conventionally as the Theseus or the Fates are unknown to us; as Semper phrases it, 'the gods of Pheidias awaken our enthusiasm first and before all things as expressions of purely human beauty and greatness.'[1] The danger that such generalization should result in emptiness (§ 44) is counteracted in this case by the extraordinary vigour and even individual character with which the shapes are vitalized, and which led Plutarch, five hundred years after their creation, to claim for them 'a sort of bloom of newness, that preserves them from the touch of time, as if they had some perennial spirit and undecaying life mingled in their composition.'[2] To the general effect then all is subordinated, and this is accomplished in the most austere spirit of self-restraint, whereby the special is sunk in the general, and we are bidden to take the works as a whole or not at all.

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[1] Gardner, *The Types of Greek Coins*, Cambridge, 1883, Pl. xv. 18.

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[1] *Der Stil*, I. p. 217, note.

[2] *Life of Pericles*, § 13.

§ 162. Sculpturesque Treatment as modified in later times.

It needs hardly to be said that the severe logic which controlled the carvers of the Periclean age, and kept their work within the strictest bounds of the sculpturesque, was notably relaxed in the later periods of classical art. In the Praxitelean age, for example, there is more play of texture, more searching into such natural details as the dimples and waviness of drapery, more facial expression, than in the previous century; while a vigorous naturalism, uncontrolled by any clear vision of the ideal, marks the still later period of the Laocoon and the Farnese Bull. It should however be noted that, in spite of these variations, Greek sculpture in its later phases—as illustrated for example in the Apoxyomenos of Lysippus (Plate XIII)—preserves all the essentials of the monumental style we have passed in review. Renaissance sculpture in the round, though strongly tinged by a certain romantic sentiment, on the whole maintains the Hellenic tradition, while a return to this in its severer form marked the sculpture of the 'classical revival' which ruled from the end of the last century to near our own time. Of this phase of modern sculpture much the same may be said as about neo-classic architecture. Condemned as 'cold' and 'monotonous' by the votary of the picturesque, it yet holds its

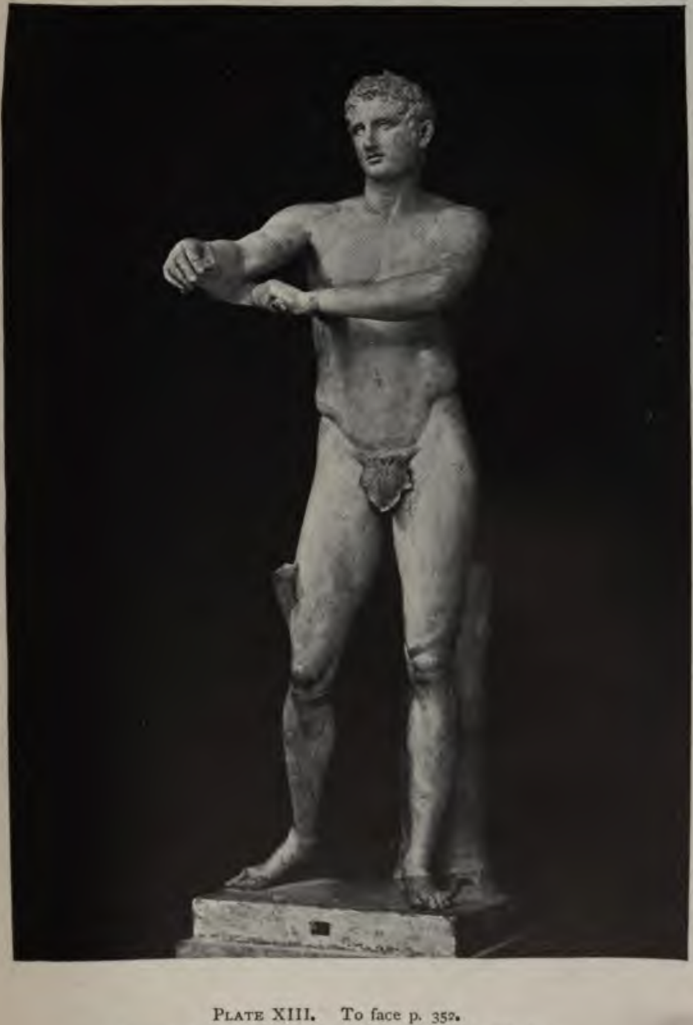

Plate XIII. To face p. 352.

Apoxyomenos (Athlete using the Strigil) in the Vatican.

ground through its obedience to the fundamental laws of the plastic art; while some of its representatives have shown that it is possible to re-vitalize the old conventions, and to produce works at once classical in treatment and modern in truth and intensity of feeling.

These later phases of the art have been directly influenced by Greek example, but the same principles have appeared also in force where no Hellenic tradition can be traced. This was the case in medieval days, for ethical greatness and a high degree of monumental beauty attach to the statues that animate the exteriors of French Gothic cathedrals, or recline, in a repose that has won a new dignity from death, on English tombs.[1] The sculptors of these had not, like the later Italians and moderns, the opportunity of studying fine antiques, and the fact just noticed seems to show that the principles in question are of universal validity—that monumental statuary, wherever essayed, must accord in the main with the rules which Greek practice has made canonical.

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[1] The sculptures on the west front of Chartres, of about the middle of the twelfth century, form by far the most interesting series, but are not specially classical in treatment. What is said in the text is best illustrated at Rheims, by the Christ of the north transept door, the Christ as Pilgrim on the upper part of the west front, the ideal figure of the Crowned Church on the south transept; the Mary of the Annunciation of the central portal, and the male figure signalized by Viollet-le-Duc between the north and central portals of the façade. It is to be noted that these stately and refined productions date from a time when Italian art was still sunk in barbarism. English work is best represented by the Edward II. at Gloucester, and the well-known bronzes of Eleanor and Henry III. at Westminster Abbey.

The foregoing discussion of monumental sculpture, as it was understood by the Greeks, may correct a tendency in some minds to regard 'the antique' as a bundle of worn-out conventions abandoned by the progressive spirit of the times. It is true that the trend of modern sculpture is not now in the direction of the monumental, and there is indeed no greater contrast in the whole range of the art than that between the neo-classic work of fifty years ago and that which now attracts the attention of the connoisseur in the yearly exhibitions. It is possible, however, fully to assimilate the charm of the most characteristic work of the day without allowing the judgment to be led captive. 'Modernité' in sculpture, finding perhaps its chief source of inspiration in Rodin, has been developed to some beautiful results in continental schools as well as in London and northern Britain, and the gain from this side to the chief artistic exhibition of our own country has been noticed above as a recent sign of national progress in art. The work in question is undoubtedly influenced, first by the sister art of painting, and next by its own material and technique. As influenced by painting, it is impressionist, in that it depends more on the single view, and less on the even all-round effect; is more expressive and less serene in its breadth, than the monumental work we have been considering. Its charm resides in poetic suggestion, sometimes better conveyed by a sketch than by a work wrought out in Hellenic thoroughness; in a delicate evanescent grace of touch; in the subtle line, the sensitive almost mobile surface. As in the painting of our day, so in its sculpture, the beauty sought for is not the clear-cut formal kind, but rather the beauty of effect discussed in § 121. When the qualities on which this beauty depends are at their best, the resulting product, compared with any of the Greek works figured in the plates of this book, is like a play of Maeterlinck's beside *Samson Agonistes.* Those who love art wisely will not ignore the latter because a somewhat jaded modern taste is pleasantly teased by the piquancy and illusiveness of the first.

The influence of material and technique shows itself in the fashionable picturesque sculpture of the day by the fact that it is essentially *clay* sculpture, taking accidentally the outward envelope of bronze or marble. The Greeks and the Italians were of course familiar with modelled work in clay, and recognized that the extreme plasticity of the material forced, as it were, on the artist a free and varied handling. Such works were then fired and became 'terra cotta,' still preserving that accordance between material and style of treatment so essential to fine artistic effect. The modern sculptor of the picturesque school builds up his figure in the true 'clay' style, putting it together bone by bone, muscle by muscle, fold by fold of drapery, till it appears before us in completeness, lean, angular, naturalistic, enlivened by accidents of surface that may impart the charm described above, but may also at times serve only to conceal the poverty or even ugliness of the forms. Such work, achieved as terra-cotta, preserves all its charm, and is even suitable to be carried out on a small scale in bronze, but it is a mistake to carve it. Both the Greeks and Michelangelo set about their stone sculpture on a totally different system. They started at once with the marble, that is with the mass, and slowly, stroke by stroke, disengaged from out the mass the beautiful form that lay hid within it waiting for release. To the end the *mass* architecturally shaped and treated, was the fundamental element in the effect, and this imparts to the work that large and majestic appearance which in so much modern modelling is sacrified to impressionist effect.

§ 163. Sculpture in Relief, its different kinds.

The conventions of sculpture in relief might furnish themes for a volume rather than a portion of a chapter. Even among the ancients it was of several kinds, so distinct as to suggest wholly different origins, while in the modern world the extension of the bounds of this particular form of art in the direction of pictorial effect has been so marked, that it is extremely difficult to say where its limits ought to be fixed. The best account of Greek practice is that contained in Sir Charles Eastlake's essay on 'Basso-Rilievo,' in his *Contributions to the Literature of the Fine Arts*, though his austere classicism rejects entirely the modifications in relief introduced by the Italians, which yet demand attentive study. In Greek practice Eastlake has indicated three kinds of relief, called by the modern terms 'alto-,' 'mezzo-,' and 'basso-rilievo.' Of these basso-rilievo he describes as that kind of low relief in which the outline is marked by being cut sharply down to the ground all round, while the modelling within the outline is very slight indeed.[1] In the second kind, or mezzo-rilievo, the forms are modelled up gradually from the ground till they reach the height determined on, and then sink gradually to the ground on the other side. In alto-rilievo the forms stand out with the utmost boldness; they are sometimes fully modelled as in the round and even detached from the background plane. At a glance it can be seen that these three kinds of relief give the impression of distinct origins and traditions. In the frieze of the Parthenon the starting-point has been the flat surface of the slabs forming part of the cella-wall. On this the design was drawn out and then cut down to a certain depth into the thickness of the marble. It is all pure chisel-work—the work of the mason. Middle relief, which occurs very commonly in the decoration of marble vases, candelabra-bases and the like, suggests in its softly-rounded masses a form beaten up out of sheet-metal according to a technical practice exceedingly popular in early times, while high relief, such as that on the Giant frieze from Pergamon at Berlin, looks like work in the round that has, for decorative reasons, been placed in an architectural niche or against a flat wall, but still keeps much of the feeling of the completed statue.[1]

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[1] One may note here that bas-relief, in the sense understood by Eastlake, is represented by the frieze of the Parthenon from which he draws all his examples, but this is by no means a usual style of work. The relief only appears low in comparison with the great extent of the work and the flatness of the internal modelling, and small reliefs constantly show a much flatter treatment. For example the reliefs on the chair of the Priest of Dionysus in the Theatre at Athens, of which a cast is in the Elgin room at the British Museum, are in true low relief, and this might furnish us with a fourth kind to add to Eastlake's three. The Italians of the great period used the term 'stiacciato' for this very low relief, and the three kinds described by Vasari are stiacciato, basso-rilievo, and mezzo-rilievo, which last includes all the higher kinds of relief up to complete detachment from the ground. (Vasari, *Opere*, I. p. 156.)

§ 164. The Conventions of Sculpture in Relief, as established by the Greeks.

In dealing now with some of the chief conventions recognized by the Greeks when working in relief, let us take first, as a typical example of the style, the already quoted frieze of the Parthenon, and leaving out of sight for the moment its excellence in composition, its life, its variety, and its masterly execution, inquire only about its technical relief treatment. In the primary matter, the actual *putting of the figures into relief*, the treatment is based generally upon a convention which had been established thousands of years earlier in Egypt, and employed both in drawing and sculpture. It is really the old-fashioned graphic convention of the ancient world, which appears on old oriental monuments as well as in Greek vase-paintings, and arises from the habit, as strong in the ancient world as among ourselves, of the designer drawing not what he *sees* but what he *knows*. The ancient draughtsman would not delineate the figure as he saw it, with some parts concealing others, but strove to exhibit at once all the parts that he knew it to possess, and twisted it mercilessly in the process. Thus the feet and legs were shown in profile, one a little in advance of the other, but the body and shoulders were given full-face as in this view they would be better seen. The head again is in profile, while finally the eye is represented in full-face view. Now the designer of the Parthenon frieze took this well-known practice as the basis of his work, introducing such modifications as were suggested by improved artistic taste and knowledge of nature. His guiding principle may be formulated thus: Before putting an object into relief choose the flattest view, and pose and turn a figure even at some gentle violence to nature so as to secure the utmost flatness of effect. In obedience to this principle horses and horsed chariots were of course treated in profile and the feet of moving figures in profile, while in the case of a leg seen in front view, to avoid the projection of the foot, the heel was raised from the ground, and the foot extended so as to bring it into the same line with the tibia. And further, among the extant figures or remains of figures on the Parthenon frieze, which roughly enumerated number about two hundred and ten, seventy, or a proportion of one-third will be found to exhibit the form specially posed and turned, sometimes at some violence to nature, with this intent.[1] A large number of others have the torso only partly turned to the front, the rest of the body being in profile,[1] while in some cases there is practically no such turning of part of the form to suit the relief, but the torso is as much in profile as the head and lower limbs.[2]

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[1] How far these impressions are justified will be considered in the quel.

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[1] *e.g.* West frieze, 27.

The unprejudiced observer will have little difficulty in deciding that the first kind of figures are really the most artistically pleasing, and the reason of this is that they conform best to the primary canon of all sculpture already noticed—the principle that sculpture is an art which *clearly displays* what it offers to the view. Graphic art may *suggest*, but sculpture *shows*. Hence the eye demands from the latter as full a display as possible, and is uneasy if asked to take too much for granted. The figures of the frieze in which, as they march forward in profile, the further shoulder is not seen at all—though they are valuable as introducing an element of variety—are not so satisfactory from the sculpturesque point of view as those where the torso is turned to the front. This convention of a flat rendering of the figure was so universally recognized by the Greeks, that it was carried through all styles of relief, and not confined to the low style only. In the metopes of the Parthenon, of which specimens are shown in Plates XIV and XV, and in the Giant frieze from Pergamon—the two finest classical examples of high or alto relief—there is the same careful selection of poses which bring the figures into flat planes.

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[1] *e.g.* The draped female figures at each end of the east frieze.

[2] 2 and 32, north frieze, and 11 west frieze, are good examples. The numbers quoted are those on the top of the black framing in he British Museum.

The importance of this primary convention of relief treatment is often neglected by the modern student in our schools of art.

Too often is it the case there that the modelling student plants himself down with board and clay in any place where a gap may be open to him in the ring, and there proceeds to make a relief study from the living model, without ascertaining first whether the pose from that view, or from any view, really admits of being rendered in relief. The same may be said of relief studies from antiques in the round, which are often attempted by students under conditions where success is impossible. Some antiques go well enough into relief, such as the Discobolus of Myron, or any work where the pose is either upright or bends like the latter in one direction only, but the Hermes at the end of the Greco-Roman gallery in the British Museum is a bad selection, because the charm of the figure consists in the graceful *lateral* contours combined with the expressive bend *forward* of the head. The relief can give the lateral contours, but to represent the bend of the head this must be brought forward out of the plane of the rest of the body, and the feeling of a classical relief is sacrificed.

From this preference on the part of the Greeks for poses which bring the figures into flat planes, there is developed a further consequence that must be noticed as another important convention of sculpture in relief. This convention consists in *keeping all parts as far as possible towards the foremost plane, or in other words minimizing* the *difference between the nearer and more remote portions of the object.* The effort of the Greeks to compass this—not of course so apparent when the whole work is flat—is very conspicuous in good examples of alto- and mezzo-rilievo. They avoid rendering one part of the figure or object in full relief while another is almost sunk into the background. In the Parthenon and other metopes this may be explained by the fact that the sculpture was recessed in a sort of box with the projections of the triglyphs on each side and the corona above, so that the figures had as it were to come forward to the edge of their shelf in order to be properly seen, but the reason is a deeper one. It was the old feeling for *breadth*, which, simplifying as it does the composition of the public monument in the round, also aims at securing clearness in the impression of the relief. The difference in the aspect of a nearer limb, fully relieved in all its light-and-shade and modelling, and the corresponding member almost lost in the background, was too great. The eye could not take them in as parts of the same whole at that first glance which is the truest measure of the work of art. Hence a greater unity of effect was secured by bringing into prominence all portions of the more remote side of the figure which could conveniently be emphasised. This rule holds good both in alto- and mezzo-rilievo and can be verified by any one in the galleries of the British Museum or in the collections of casts from the antique at South Kensington and elsewhere.

Again, this keeping forward of all parts of the object really means the abandonment of *foreshortening*, which is a device to be avoided in relief treatment. The Greeks sometimes tried it but seldom with happy effect. In the friezes from the Theseum and from Phigaleia, represented in cast and in original at the British Museum, there is a fallen Centaur with his human body foreshortened towards the spectator, but the passage is ineffective, and served no doubt as a lesson to the Greek sculptors that such attempts must end in failure.

Other points of treatment, having the same aim of clearness, are so ably dealt with in Sir Charles Eastlake's Essay that a reference thereto will suffice. He shows, for example, how in the Parthenon frieze the sharp outlining of the composition was designed to give it clearness of delineation upon the flat background, and how careful were the Greeks in alto-rilievo to avoid crossing the limbs, or throwing an arm across the body, so that an accidental and confusing shadow would be cast. The effective shadow was that cast by the mass of the composition on the ground, and nothing was suffered to interfere with this, the mass being so treated as to tell out in light.

The Parthenon metopes are superb examples of effect in high relief secured by adherence to the principles here rehearsed, and they illustrate so well certain points in artistic treatment already touched on that a moment may be spent upon the two shown in Plates XIV and XV. The comparison between these is instructive because the first is decidedly inferior in treatment, and exhibits the designer struggling with difficulties which the artist of No. XV has triumphantly overcome. In both cases a Hero and a Centaur are at death-grips, but whereas in No. XIV the two stand tamely opposite each other and in a somewhat ungainly manner thrust out opposing arms and legs, in No. XV they come together in the composition as one, and form a single pyramidal mass. Note how in the freer work the drapery is used to fill up awkward spaces and mass the forms, while in the other, where drapery is absent, there is a bareness and poverty of effect.

The following principles or canons of sculpture in relief seem accordingly to evolve themselves from Greek practice, when viewed in the light of the necessary conditions of the sculptor's art. *Choose, and if necessary secure by posing, flatness of aspect in the model. Bring all parts more or less up to the same level so that the design tells as a whole against the background. Avoid foreshortening, accidental shadows within the design, and everything which impairs the clearness of effect.*

§ 165. Relief Treatment as influenced by Materials and Processes: Greek and Italian Technique.

The practice of the Greeks is sometimes explained by saying that they had always in their mind two planes, one the plane of the background, and another so many inches in front of it, according to the height of relief desired; and while the limit of this second imaginary plane was never exceeded, as much of the subject as possible was brought up to it. The remark is true, but in

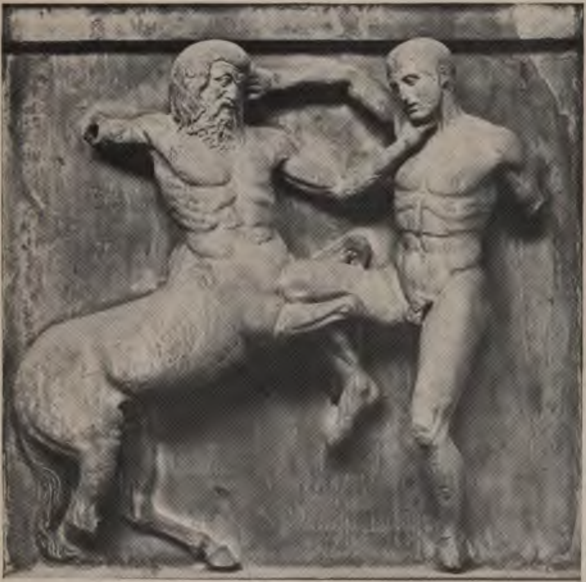

Plate XIV. Between pages 364 and 365.
Metope from the Parthenon, showing traces of archaism.

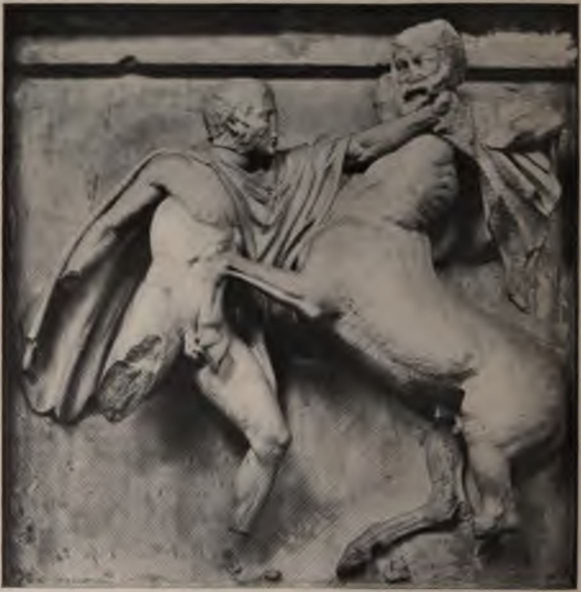

PLATE XV. Between pages 364 and 365.
Metope from the Parthenon, free style.

a sense not always understood by those who repeat it. The Greeks had such a plane, but it was not *second* or *imaginary*, but *primary and real.* As they would cut their reliefs out of the marble by the aid of drawings and small studies without full-size clay models, this plane would be in reality the original surface from which they cut down to the required depth, constituting there a parallel plane for the background. This technique would certainly result in the characteristics of a Greek relief, for nothing could surpass the supposed outer boundary since this is the actual starting-place of the whole work: whereas if the relief began with the background and were constituted by the addition, piece by piece, of plastic clay, many more varieties in depth would show themselves, and portions would infallibly exhibit a tendency to project beyond sober limits.

Here we see the importance of the influence which material and technique exercise on relief treatment, for it is from these that we can in part explain the extraordinary contrast between the reliefs of the Greeks, and Italian reliefs in the style of Ghiberti and Donatello. When the Greeks wanted a relief in metal they beat it up out of a sheet of silver, gold, or bronze. So tractable is sheet-metal, that it is possible to secure in the raised forms considerable boldness of projection, and even sharp under-cutting, such as are shown in certain bravura works of the later classical period.[1] In oriental art, however, and that of early classical times, the relief is always low.[1] On the other hand, the characteristic Italian reliefs, such as those on the Old Testament Gate of Ghiberti, or on the font of the Baptistry at Siena, or those from the life of St. Anthony at Padua by Donatello, were in *cast bronze*, a material not employed by the ancients for such work except in the small decorative details of objects of industrial art. With the Italian the metal is as it were an afterthought; the forms are modelled up in clay or wax by successive additions, and these additions, so easy and ready to the hand, naturally tempt the worker beyond the strict limits which the more direct technique would have imposed on him.

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[1] For example, the Bronzes from Siris (British Museum) and some silver reliefs in the Hildesheim treasure at Berlin.

That he was only too ready to yield to the temptation in question was due to causes lying at the root of Italian art activity, which have been indicated already in the chapter on Medieval Florence and her Painters. The Italian sculptors of the fifteenth century were eager to extend to the furthest the boundaries of their art, so as to make it match the complexity and variety of that external world in which they took so vivid an interest. The rigid limits within which the Greeks had confined their representations no longer satisfied the quattrocentisti, and they modified in many remarkable respects the canons of Greek relief treatment. A few sentences on the history of relief from the great period of Greek art onwards will be necessary for clearness.

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[1] As in the Assyrian Bronze Gates from Balawat (British Museum) and the reliefs—originally in gold—on the Shield of the Athene Parthenos by Pheidias.

In the Hellenistic period after the conquests of Alexander, by the side of the severely architectural relief there grew up a style of relief of a more pictorial kind, in which various objects were introduced beside the chief actors, and backgrounds with trees and other natural features were also added, 'the aim being to produce in sculpture a representation of landscape and figures in the spirit of a painter.'[1] In these reliefs an action is represented in the foreground, with animals, a tree-stem, pieces of furniture etc. grouped around, while above these may be the conventional representation of a rock or the long façade and part of the front of a temple. There is no real attempt to represent different planes of distance; everything is on a level, but there is a distinct effort at enlivening the field of the action with various subsidiary objects. This style of relief was adopted by the makers of carved sarcophagi in the late classical period, where we find compositions greatly overcrowded with figures and backgrounds filled in with natural objects.

It was on these sarcophagus-reliefs that the carvers of the twelfth century in Provence, and after them the early Pisan sculptors, formed their style, and hence came the crowded compositions of the famous pulpits of Niccola and Giovanni Pisano (reproduced at South Kensington). On the other hand early Italian work shows at times true sculpturesque feeling, of a kind akin to that of the Greeks, and was possibly inspired (though we cannot trace a direct connection) by the French Gothic sculpture that preceded the Italian revival. Of this order are many of the reliefs on the Campanile of Giotto at Florence, as well as the simpler scenes and single figures on the earliest gate of the Baptistry by Andrea Pisano, which look like French work carried somewhat further in composition and detail. It was when perspective was introduced early in the fifteenth century, and the sphere of graphic delineation was greatly widened, that Italian relief treatment began to show those peculiar features that have made it so influential in modern practice. The aim of Ghiberti was nothing more nor less than to transport the receding plane, established under the influence of perspective as the field of the picture, into the domain of sculpture, and to display as many groups and objects as possible on different parts of it. To quote his own words in his *Commentaries*: 'The panels of the gate were very copious in figures . . . in which I set myself to imitate nature to the furthest point possible and with the greatest number of figures that could be introduced . . . there is relief of the very lowest kind, and on the different planes the figures that are nearer the spectator are made larger and the more remote ones smaller. . . .'[1]

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[1] Thodor Schreiber, *die Hellenistischen Reliefbilder*, Leipzig, 1889, Introduction.

§ 166. The innovations of Ghiberti examined: their influence on Modern Sculpture.

Ghiberti's reliefs are too well known to need description here, and the well-worn criticisms on them need hardly be repeated. The question which he may be said to have propounded, How far may the sculptor go in representing planes of distance in relief, is one that since his time has been often discussed and illustrated both in words and works. In the eighteenth century the sculptor Falconet, while recognizing the supremacy of the Greeks in monumental work in the round, claims the right of the modern sculptor to advance beyond the limits set by them for relief. Why should not the sculptor, he asks, follow the painter in his effects? The answer is that the laws of an art are not penal laws and no one is bound to observe them unless he likes, but that, at the same time, the nature of different materials and processes suggests certain limits that the worker oversteps at his peril. The painter has at his command linear and aerial perspective, through the aid of which he can represent distance in the most perfect manner. The sculptor, whose material is all of the same colour, has practically no aerial perspective at his command. He can, like Ghiberti, throw his work into linear perspective, sloping up his ground, introducing buildings etc. perspectively drawn, and reducing the scale of his figures in the background; but he cannot make us forget the rigid wall which we know bounds his scene at the distance of a few inches, nor can he bathe the small figures of the background, as the painter can, in air, so that they look really remote. Falconet indeed recommends that the figures on the second plane should not be modelled 'd'une touche aussi ferme, que celles du premier,' in order to suit ' la dégradation que la distance, l'air et notre œil mettent naturellement entre nous et les objets,'[1] claiming that ' le vague et l'indécis de la touche, joints à la proportion diminuée selon les règles de la perspective ' will give the effect of aerial perspective required; and in fact on Ghiberti's panels we may see sharp foreground touches contrasting with the softer more uncertain contours of objects intended to look more remote.

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[1] Vasari, ed. Le Monnier, I. p. xxxiv.

In this way the Florentine could fill his panel with a 'story,' in which as he boasts there were sometimes a hundred figures, and as his feeling for composition and grace of form was exceptionally acute, the result is in itself very lovely. We can understand how Michelangelo, though he wrote once that he held 'that kind of relief the worst which went furthest in the direction of painting,'[2] could yet say of the Old Testament gates that they were worthy to be the doors of Paradise, but it is rather the result of Ghiberti's innovation on less finely gifted sculptors of his own and later times that we have to consider, and this influence has been little short of disastrous. To it we owe the later Italian reliefs (represented in over-abundance at the South Kensington Museum) in which the studied composition of Ghiberti disappears, and the field is filled with a crowd of figures and horses, jostling each other in a confusion which is lively enough, but far from sculpturesque; and, in continuance of the same practice, the modern pictorial relief, in which an effort is made to find the limits of relief treatment, not so much in the matter of perspective, as in the effect of suggestion gained by a studied indefiniteness of modelling. With regard to these and other modern experiments in plastic treatment, nothing more can be said here than was remarked about sculpture in the round—in monumental work the conventions established by the Greeks must still be recognized as valid, though in lighter phases of the art the sculptor may claim to exercise in freedom his gift for the unexpected, the piquant, and the picturesque.

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[1] *Œuvres*, Paris, 1808, III. p. 35.

[2] Bottari, *Raccolta di Lettere*, I. p. 9.

CHAPTER III

PAINTING OLD AND NEW

§ 167. The Limitations of Fresco Practice

IF the pages already devoted to Florentine painting afford anything like a true idea of the work of the frescoist of the fifteenth century, the reader will readily perceive that the sphere of painting could be enlarged far beyond the bounds he recognized. Such enlargement was now to come, and it took effect both in extending the field of painting and in intensifying its practice. It was stated above (§ 72) that however the modern critic may regard the old decorative frescoes, the Florentine himself seems chiefly to have delighted in them for their life-like character as exact representations of nature. It is true that Vasari rightly praises Ghirlandajo for simplifying his compositions and discarding a good deal of the padding and frippery delighted in by second-rate designers, and recognizes thereby that painting is a matter of style rather than delineation ; but nevertheless, like the rest of his countrymen, Vasari is ready to worship some well-observed piece of foreshortening, some touch of nature in the action of a bystander. 'I painted and my painting was as life' runs the first lines of a certain epitaph for Masaccio, expressing tersely the Florentine ideal, and on this it must now be remarked that the aim was one which under the conditions of the craft could not be fully carried out. The fresco was and could be only to a very limited extent like nature. It was near enough to nature to remind the quick-witted Italian of something he had seen in the everyday life of the streets or in a festal rappresentazione, but it could not be like nature, in the sense in which this is possible in a modern picture, for two sufficient reasons. (1) If the fresco remained, as it was in its origin and in its essence, a form of mural decoration, it could not suitably represent different planes of distance, nor throw objects into strong relief by light-and-shade, for this would contradict the flatness of the wall, and decoration cannot be right if it contradict construction. (2) As the process was rapid, and where possible completed at a sitting, the painter could not search into the subtleties of changing tints and shadows in nature, but had to be content to summarize. Now the face of the world actually presents itself not as an upright slice, but as a horizontal plane stretching away to infinite distance, and that which gives to objects their place and reality on that plane at different degrees of remoteness, is the atmosphere which envelopes them and determines their light-and-shade. In other words, without perspective and chiaroscuro nature cannot be adequately represented, and with perspective and chiaroscuro mural decoration has no call to concern itself.

§ 168. The first stages of the advance: Linear Perspective;

The enlargement and intensifying which the art of painting underwent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries carried it far beyond the decorative sphere, and it became in all essentials another art with aims and conditions of its own. This change from Old to New Painting begins soon after the year 1400, and a certain period of transition is marked by the introduction, early in the fifteenth century, of the effects of linear perspective into mural painting in fresco.

This, as we have just seen, was from the decorative point of view the very negation of the art, but on the other hand, the introduction of perspective effected an emancipation of painting from those bonds in which the logic of decoration would have confined it. It gained therefrom ultimately far more than it lost, for after a time it ceased in its most important forms to be a decorative art at all, and became, in the modern cabinet picture, an art of independent expression. For a time however the contradiction just noticed ruled in the art; through its perspective effects it ceased to be strictly decorative, yet it still clung to the wall, dependence upon which seemed an essential condition of its existence.

The revolution, which was being prepared for the art of painting through the invention of perspective, is prefigured in the book by

Leon Battista Alberti of Florence entitled *De Pictura libri tres* and given to the public about 1436. A large portion of this book is occupied with the new science which Brunelleschi, Donatello, Alberti and others were at that time engaged in perfecting, and stories in Vasari bring vividly before us the intensity with which they threw themselves into the study. '*Oh che dolce cosa è questa Prospettiva*'! was the exclamation of Paolo Uccello of Florence, as he stood at his desk, somewhere between midnight and dawn, while his shivering spouse was imploring him to come and take some rest in bed. 'O how sweet a thing' was that Perspective to those to whom it was not a series of cut and dried puzzles, but an actual weapon and tool for work almost miraculous in its potency. To the men who themselves found out the relations and formulæ on which perspective depends, these had connection, not with Science and Art examination papers, but with the actual material objects of their environment. Let us imagine the Florentine frescoist, whom we have already seen transferring to the upright plane of his chapel-wall the processions and shows which filled up the foreground of a city scene, suddenly brought into contact with the entirely different view of nature which would be taken by the adept of the new science. He has journeyed, let us say, from Florence to Luna. It is near sunset, and he sits by the shore of the calm Mediterranean watching the broad red disc descend in a sea-mist towards the horizon. The bay is dotted with vessels at varying distances. One lies at anchor broadside-on, some hundred bracchie from the water's edge. He looks at the boat and then beyond it to the more distant craft, the horizon and the sun, and he realizes, with that shock which comes of seeing a familiar thing in quite a new aspect, that the level surface of the sea seems to slope upwards towards the horizon, carrying up with it the vessels, scores of them, till one of them actually meets and partly covers the orb of the sun, which by this time is probably dipping below the verge. If he put his hand up before his eyes at half-arm's length, behold, these things, so many and so great, are all covered up and disappear. Instead of his hand he now holds up his writing tablets, and notes that they cover in height all the space from the near boat to far above the sun, and in width the length of the boat and a good space on either hand. Now he knows that he can draw the boat almost as easily as he can look at it, and can draw too all the more distant boats above and a little on each side of it, and the sun, and the hovering clouds that wait on its departure; but he has never realized before so clearly that on this tablet, a span long and a hand-breadth high, he can in this way represent a surface stretching away from a little in front of his feet into infinite distance. The knowledge too that those initiated into the new science would be able, under proper conditions, to fix with mathematical certainty the relative sizes and shapes and positions of the large but distant objects, as they should appear minutely reduced upon the tablet, strikes his mind with something like the force of a new revelation.

The phenomenon in question is to us moderns so perfectly familiar that we take it as a matter of course, but it is none the less a standing marvel, and was certainly recognized as such by those who first had apprehension of it as a new truth. It was one thing, they would feel, to paint upright objects on an upright wall, but quite another thing to translate the level ground stretching away from under their feet into infinity into a horizontal band upon a similar vertical wall; and it was the apprehension of this difference that was the creation of modern painting. The frescoist, whose eyes had been opened by some such experience as that just described, would try to effect this process of translation in his mural decoration, and though *as mural decoration* the result may not have been to its advantage, the attempt represented a stage in advance in the general development of painting. In altar-pieces the new process was more in keeping. Thus for example in Mantegna's noble creation at San Zeno, Verona, we find attendant saints no longer standing grouped by the side of the Madonna's throne, but in extended rows in front, so that we see the throne at a little distance along a sort of vista of standing figures. An excellent example of successful translation of this kind on a large scale is to be found in Carpaccio's scenic pictures from the legend of St. Ursula, painted at Venice before the end of the fifteenth century, in some of which we find an astonishing multitude of figures and objects at varying distances peopling the vast receding planes of earth and sea.

§ 169. and Foreshortening.

This same process was also applied with equal science and success to individual objects, in relation to which it is known as foreshortening. As perspective taught the representation of the horizontal plane of earth on the vertical plane of the wall or canvas, so it taught the proper delineation, under the same conditions, of the extended body or limb. Hence the feats of foreshortening in figure-drawing of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, over which Vasari waxes as enthusiastic as over the life-like rendering of incidents. We need only mention Michelangelo's tour de force in the Sistine Chapel, where the figure of the prophet Jonah, though actually painted on a part of the coved ceiling sloping *towards* the beholder, is so drawn as to appear leaning back and violently foreshortened *away from* the spectator's eye. The Italian painter who most thoroughly grasped the secret of foreshortening was Correggio, whose figures seem to have presented themselves to his imagination more familiarly upon receding planes than either in upright poses or in horizontal positions parallel to the edge of the picture. Giorgione and Titian displayed their fair recumbent nudes on planes of the latter kind, but the Danae of Correggio in the Borghese collection, Rome, reclines away from the spectator ; the Magdalen in the Giorno, or St. Jerome altar-piece, at Parma, Allegri's choicest masterpiece of painting, also leans away into the picture, while the same great draughtsman positively revels in the problems of foreshortening he set himself in the cupolas at Parma. This famous attempt to paint scenes in the upper air just as they would appear to a spectator straining his neck from below, resulted in an effort to delineate a sacred event as going on in the midst of a halo of celestial legs (which is all that under such circumstances could really be seen), and it is now recognized to have been a mistake; none the less however is it a potent instance of the fascination exercised over the painters of the period by the science of linear perspective.

§ 170. Aerial Perspective and Light-and-Shade, necessary for further advance, were not fully mastered by the Italians.

Linear perspective and foreshortening, however, though of the first importance, were not the only factors in the transformation of painting from its old to its modern form. It is indeed hardly so much by linear perspective, or the progressive diminution in size of objects as they recede, as by the gradual degradation of the intensity of light and shadow, and the diminished saturation of colours, that distance—and so the face of nature as a whole—can be brought vividly before the eye. Foreshortening as a matter of drawing is simple enough in itself, but it involves for the conscientious artist the subtlest problems of tone and colour; for as the form in question recedes from the eye, changes of the most delicate kind in the illumination and hue of the parts present themselves for record and reproduction. Only through the rarest gifts of artistic vision and skill of hand in matching faint transitions, can these new difficulties be fully met and overcome.

One may ask, were not these early Italian masters, so keen of eye, so accomplished of hand, ever tempted to probe the aspect of things about them more narrowly, and to search out those mysteries of light-and-shade that transform as by magic the face of familiar objects? Venice, as well as Florence, had her brilliant festal pageants which shone with redoubled lustre upon the broad expanses of the lagoon. When Beatrice of Este was welcomed to Venice in 1491 the sea was covered for a mile or more with gaily-adorned vessels, on which were groups representing tritons and sea nymphs, with fair boys and girls poised up on masts and spars in guise of classical genii. The life, the glitter of these scenes, set off with noble architectural or maritime backgrounds, and bathed in colour reflected by rich eastern stuffs and pearls and gold, the painters of Venice readily learned to prize; but had they no eye for the remoter charm of fading light and mantling shadow, on the large scale or the small, over the wide lagoon or in the narrow canals?

After a supper at Titian's house at the back of Venice looking towards Murano, when the sun had set, we read how the lagoon was quickly alive with gondolas carrying coloured lamps and bearing the valour and beauty of the city for a cruise in the cool evening air. Had not the night a charm when all the richness and beauty of the scene was

> 'mellow'd to that tender light
> Which heaven to gaudy day denies'?

The truth is that the Italians, like all classical and classically trained peoples, loved the light, and left it to the men of the North to discover what fresh beauties might lie concealed as suggestions beneath a veil of shadow. Here is what a painter of to-day has said about nightfall on the Thames: 'And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand, as they have ceased to see, and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master——.'[1]

Only in the North and only since the seventeenth century could this have been felt or uttered by the painter. Up to that time sculpture and painting, both Greek and Christian, had aimed at the clear delineation of noble themes. The shapes they created were not fashioned to be in any way concealed, and they offered them with a certain serene self-satisfaction to close inspection in every part. The change from this principle of representation to that prevailing in modern times is even more momentous than that produced by the introduction of perspective; and it was mainly accomplished through the work of a northern artist, one of the strongest and most individual of painters. This innovation, with which the name of Rembrandt is chiefly associated, may be briefly described as the introduction of mystery as an element of effect in the imitative arts. As by a stroke of enchantment Rembrandt brought down a cloud over the face of nature, and beneath it, half-revealed, half-hidden, her shapes met the eye in aspects full of new suggestion. This effect of mystery was secured through the use of light-and-shade on a new principle and to an extent hitherto unknown. Previous artists had indeed, as we shall presently see, made considerable use of shadow, but they had employed it for the purpose of giving roundness and relief to their forms, and so making delineation at once more true and more forcible. Light-and-shade to them were subordinate elements of design, while Rembrandt was the first to make compositions of light-and-shade—to use them as a musician uses his tones, as in themselves vehicles of artistic effect, and this naturally gave chiaroscuro an importance it had never before possessed.

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[1] J. M'N. Whistler, *The Gentle Art*, etc. p. 144.

§ 171. Light-and-Shade as used by the Italian Painters;

The principal names that represent the first artistic advances in light-and-shade previous to the age of Rembrandt are those of Leonardo da Vinci and Correggio. It is true that as soon as the introduction of perspective commenced in the fifteenth century to disturb the old placid traditions of mural painting, shadows began also to be deepened and effects of light to be more pronounced. Piero della Francesca represents this movement, but neither he nor his compatriots of a century later, such as Caravaggio, used light-and-shade for any other purpose than to make their forms tell out more forcibly against the background. Leonardo and, after him, Allegri observed light-and-shade more narrowly, and strove to represent their subtle play over a form which they kiss without forcibly enclosing. To the ordinary delineator an arm or a leg is a more or less cylindrical object, which can be outlined on both sides and made to appear solid by longitudinal stripes of light and shadow and half-tone; but Leonardo and Correggio saw the light steal over face or torso or limb, giving prominence here to the rounded muscular masses and passing into half-tones as these sink into their tendinous prolongations, marking the dimple with shadow, the ridge of bone with sharper brightness. On Correggio's torso of the half-reclining Danae the light is not all on one side and the shadow on the other, but light and shade chase one another over all the girl-like but rounded forms. In the Mona Lisa of Leonardo in the Louvre, the modelling of the face and hands is carried out with a finish of analysis that has made the work the despair of all who essay these delicate problems, while in a nearer example (though it is a more doubtful specimen of the master), the Vierge aux Rochers of the National Gallery, the chubby limbs of the children are rendered with the same soft rise and fall of light over the yielding surface. All this shows a great advance towards a more searching treatment of natural forms, a finer appreciation of their more recondite beauties, than were thought of by the older masters, but the handling of light-and-shade did not yet extend from the rendering of the individual objects over the composition of the whole piece. Direktor Julius Meyer, in his work on Allegri, has noticed that only in two instances, the so-called 'Notte' at Dresden—in which all the light in the picture streams from the head of the Divine Child—and the Christ in the Garden at Apsley House (copy in the National Gallery), does Correggio use light-and-shade in the same spirit as Rembrandt, and Correggio is far nearer to Rembrandt in this department of art than any other of the great Italians.

§ 172. and as developed by Rembrandt and the Northerns.

Rembrandt's new employment of chiaroscuro—to correspond with which he introduced in the Etching a new mode of artistic expression productive of this effect alone—carried with it several very important consequences. It was not only that the painter was put in the possession of fresh resources of language for the expression of artistic thought, so that he could henceforth speak to the world, if he chose, merely through effects of tone instead of through the outlines and colours of material things; the ordinary field of his activity was widened by the greater prominence now given to what had hitherto been merely a subsidiary element in design. A quickened observation of tone led to the development of aerial perspective, which is, as we have seen, undoubtedly the most telling way of conveying the impression of distance.

The distances of the painters of the older school had been full of objects and figures as minutely rendered as those on the foremost planes, only ever-so-much smaller. Of this kind is the distance in Carpaccio's large scenic pictures from the Ursula legend in the Venice Academy. Compare with these distances the simply treated expanse of country offered to view in P. de Koninck's two large landscapes in the Peel and Wynn-Ellis collections in the National Gallery. Here we do not have merely a series of objects getting smaller as they recede, but a far more generalized representation of the whole face of nature bathed in an atmosphere in which 'objects' are lost to view. This is aerial perspective, and it is only possible through a most careful study of refined gradations of tone.

§ 173. Influence of the new treatment in extending the field of Painting;

Further, with this generalizing process, through which the individual object became merged in the broad effect, went hand in hand the substitution of the magic of suggestion for the strict delineation of the schools of form, and by this at once the sphere of the painter's art was immeasurably widened. When artistic representation, no longer clear and complete, relies rather upon subtle hints and adumbrations of the truth, then formal beauty or distinction in the subject grows less important, and the common things of the world become fitting themes for ideal treatment. In the poetry of half-shadow or in a mist of light, what is in itself mean or ugly may become transformed. 'How ugly that house is,' said a lady who was looking over engravings with John Constable. 'No, madam,' was the reply, 'there is nothing ugly. I never saw an ugly thing in my life—for let the form of an object be what it may, light, shade and perspective will always make it beautiful.'

§ 174. especially in regard to Landscape.

And with this humanitarian breadth, this lifting of common things to the ideal sphere, goes the modern treatment of landscape. Rembrandt, the first master who made a general use of light-and-shade as the chief element in a work, is also the father of modern landscape, in that he was the first who made landscape appeal directly to human sentiment. A poet-painter, he first established that magnetic sympathy between man and nature through which the external world has become so large a factor in our mental development. Man could never enter, so to say, into relations of sympathy with the external world, unless the face of nature became expressive and rendered him back glance for glance. All that the landscape painter knows under the name of 'effect' is just expression upon nature's countenance, and effect is a result of changing tones and shadows, of veiling mist, of the breaking forth of light—of all in short that Rembrandt first brought within the painter's power of realization. Landscape painting in the modern sense is only possible through the employment of that charm of mystery the value of which in art he was the first to discern.

§ 175. Summary of the foregoing.

We see then, to summarize the foregoing, that in certain at any rate of its aspects, the art of painting followed a progressive course of development from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Linear perspective taught the painter to realize that what he had to represent was not a thin upright slice of things taken where they were nearest to him, but nature as a whole; that the picture should be no mere transcript of objects against a flat background, but rather an enchanted mirror in which should be reflected space beyond space in infinite recession. To accomplish this, drawing was not sufficient without the help of light-and-shade. But light-and-shade, crudely juxtaposed in sharp contrast, gave force to delineation but no help towards aerial perspective. For this there had rather to be noted the almost imperceptible transitions of tone as objects receded from the eye of the spectator. These transitions are however equally subtle in near objects according to the varying angles at which their surfaces catch the light, and it was by the fine observations of Leonardo and his followers of the tone of near objects that the way was prepared for a broad and free treatment of light-and-shade over the whole face of nature. This the Italians if left to themselves might never have accomplished, for they loved light and were taught through long tradition to value above all things the clear delineation of objects worthy to be seen. The northern artists who could never have postrayed things so beautifully as the Italians, had on the other hand a distinct feeling for mystery, and a tolerance for an obscurity full of poetical suggestion, such as would always scandalize the Southern. Hence Rembrandt with his mist and darkness took away from the form of things their old importance and enabled the artist to generalize to an extent before unknown. Subtle observation of tone and comparative carelessness of definite delineation combined to make aerial perspective in the broadest sense a possibility for art, while at the same time light and shade emancipated from objects become in themselves elements of an artistic composition. So, finally, the distances of the world, once filled full by a Carpaccio with delightful but unnecessary little objects, passed under the veil of gloom cast over them by Rembrandt to emerge simplified but glorified as pure space and atmosphere on the enchanted canvases of Claude of Lorraine.

§ 176. The introduction of Oil-Painting and the Tempera Style.

The scope of the change in the character of painting we are now considering included the intensifying of its technical practice, which becomes more varied, expressive and elaborate. Up to the fifteenth century two processes of painting were in use, the already noticed mural painting a fresco (§ 70) and panel-painting a tempera, that is with pigments mixed with some binding material through which they were retained in the place where they were laid. This binding material varied in different localities according to climate and tradition, and was composed of substances like white of egg, milk of fig-shoots, and size, and was generally soluble in water, though it could be protected afterwards by a waterproof varnish. A new kind of binding material came into use in the fifteenth century, consisting of certain oily and resinous elements, not soluble in water, and drying into a very hard and unchangeable substance, and these or similar media have been in common use ever since in the processes known as oil-painting. Strictly speaking oil-painting is a form of painting 'a tempera,' *i.e.* 'with a mixture,' for the oily nature of the vehicle is only an accident, and the only real distinction is between painting with and without any kind of binding mixture; but the effective difference between tempera and oil-painting is in fact very great. The one is generally recognized as a precise, smooth, spiritless style, while the latter admits of the greatest freedom, force and variety, and can be so handled as to express in a remarkable way the artistic individuality of the wielder of the brush. It is noteworthy that this difference does not necessarily follow from the character of the materials employed, for the mere change to oil or varnish from a glutinous vehicle not oleaginous is after all not very important. It is quite possible to paint a tempera with the same strength of colouring and variety of texture that are obtainable in oils, though the oily medium is far preferable, especially in a damp climate, from its greater resistance to change. Moderns have sometimes used egg-tempera as under-painting for oils, or by itself well locked up with varnish, with an effect every whit as free and artistic as any gained with the ordinary medium, and the experiment can be tried by any one who chooses to procure well-ground powdered colours and mix them by the palette knife with the inside of an egg slightly beaten up. Pigment so treated can be used with any required degree of body, and manipulated to any desired texture. Dry colour can be dragged over under-painting, and wet colour used in glazes. All effects, indeed, are open to the tempera painter if he choose to employ his colour so mixed, in the same way as he would treat his oils. The contrast with which we are all so familiar between the tempera style and oil-painting, is based in truth upon the historical fact that before the early part of the fifteenth century panel pictures were always painted in some form of tempera, and were also always executed in a minute painstaking fashion, productive of clean outlines, well-fused tints, and a smooth enamel-like surface.[1] As a fact, after the oil medium had superseded tempera in the practice of the Flemish painters, and in that too of some of the Florentines, the technique remained the same, and it is often impossible by mere inspection to distinguish in fifteenth-century practice tempera pieces varnished, from contemporary work in oils. So soon, however, as the new medium came in the way of the painters of Venice (whose gifts in art were widely different from those of the Flemings or Tuscans), and was by them after some struggle vanquished, the precise and timid style quickly gave place to one of far more freedom and boldness, and oil-painting in the modern sense was launched upon the world.

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[1] Good examples of tempera practice are to be found in the portraits in profile of ladies, by Florentine masters of the fifteenth century, to be met with in many collections. Precise delineation is always characteristic of the style.

§ 177. Importance of the change for the character of Modern Painting.

The use now made of the new method of colouring was of a kind that soon came to correspond with the more searching treatment of nature in the matter of light-and-shade introduced by Leonardo. By light-and-shade the accidental variations in the surface of objects received their due importance, and delineation became correspondingly fuller of interest. Oil-painting now invited the artist to represent by delicate manipulation of pigment the varieties of colour and also of texture to be discerned in similar surfaces. In flesh painting, for example, there were shown not only all the dimples and roundnesses, but also the varieties of colour in different parts, due partly to the surface tint of the skin, and partly to the transmission from below of the colour of the blood, while in stuffs and jewels, smooth and velvety textures could be distinguished in the very way the pigment was laid on by the brush. So much observation of so many varied beauties in nature could be now concentrated by the painter upon a few square feet of his canvas, that a piece of fine execution, no matter what is represented, has since that time become in itself of artistic value. So much more is seen and shown upon the surface of the object chosen, that our attention is not aroused to ask what the object as a whole may be. In fact for us it may be anything, so long as it has beauties of subtily modulated form and colour and texture. The result here is the same as that produced by Rembrandtesque light-and-shade. By enfolding the common things of earth in a veil of mystery the chiaroscurist gives them value through the charm of poetic suggestion, and in exactly the same way the painter, fastening on those accidental beauties of texture and of colour which may occur on objects familiar or mean, makes them fitting themes for ideal artistic treatment. How different is such an aim from that of the older frescoist, who made his theme tell as a whole, as subject, as a thing to be seen and studied, and felt no inclination towards a refined analysis of the parts, insistence on which would have marred his general effect!

§ 178. Attitude of the Florentines towards the new Medium.

The attitude of some of the representatives of the old school to those of the new, during the sixteenth century, proves that this consideration was present to men's thoughts. When Michelangelo was preparing to paint the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, his friend Sebastian del Piombo the Venetian, an old pupil of Giorgione, advised him to work in oil, and the wall was accordingly prepared for this medium. The

Florentine would not, however, touch the work, and had the intonaco changed to one suitable for fresco, grimly remarking that 'to colour in oil was an art for women or for such easy-going indolent people as Fra Bastiano.'[1] Remarks of the same tenor may very well have fallen from the master's lips on other occasions, and Vasari, his dutiful follower, may have had them in his mind when he compares practice in fresco with that in oil in the Introduction to his *Lives.* The oil medium he praises because it 'kindles the colours,' and at the same time admits of a softer blending of the pigments, whence 'in a word artists can give by this method the most charming grace and vivacity and force to their figures, so that they seem to be in relief upon the panel,'[2] but of fresco he says, 'of all the other ways in which painters work, wall-painting is the finest and most masterly, since it consists in doing upon a single day that which in other methods may be accomplished in several by going over again what has been done. . . . There are many of our craft who do well enough in other kinds of work, as for example in oil or tempera, but fail in this, for this is in truth the most manly, the safest and most solid of all ways of painting.'[3] In these remarks it is pretty clear that Vasari had in his mind the practice of the Flemings, and of those Italians who were wont to use oils in the same precise spirit as the tempera painters. The Flemings, whose work was well enough known at

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[1] Vasari, ed. Milanesi, V. p. 584, *Vita di Sebastiano Veneziano.*

[2] Vasari, I. p. 185, *Introduzione, della Pittura*, ch. vii.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 182.

Florence, through the commercial relations of that city with the Netherlands, delighted in oil-painting mainly for the opportunity it gave for detail. It was a process admitting of leisurely and repeated applications of the brush, resulting in extreme minuteness of execution and a gem-like brilliance of surface, that was specially effective when it represented rich stuffs or gilded and jewelled accessories of dress and furniture. In painting which aimed at these effects there was, as we can readily believe, something that seemed to the Florentine frescoists very petty and niggling, and that contrasted very poorly with their own broad and simple treatment of large wall spaces. Had Vasari, however, not taken his idea of oil practice from the Flemings, but turned his mind in the direction of Venice or of Parma, he would have at once remembered that oil-painting in the hands of a Titian, a Veronese, or an Allegri, might possess all the qualities of breadth and freedom attainable in fresco, with the addition of others which enlarged immensely the scope of the art. The oil-painting of a Tintoretto when displayed on the eighteen hundred square feet of canvas of the Paradise was not an art for women, and the prodigious ease and rapidity with which his stormy pencil swept over the walls of the Scuola di San Rocco conveys a different impression from that of a piece of Flemish texture-painting. It is clear that Vasari does less than justice to the new medium, but at the same time the remarks of the accomplished frescoist are of value as emphasising that difference between Old and New aims in painting, to which is due so much of the interest of this important epoch of transition.

§ 179. The Technique of Oil-Painting.

Examining now the practice of the greatest masters in oils, what is it that we find? We see a medium of very extensive range giving opportunity for many different effects. The pigments are generally used of a certain consistency, and are lightened by being mixed with more or less of the dense substance, white lead. Spread as a paste of a sensible thickness on the surface of the panel or canvas, the impasto, as it is called, can be made to assume various textures, smooth or granulated, at will, and may exhibit the actual direction and relative fulness of the very brush strokes, loaded or slightly charged with pigment. It is possible so to direct these strokes in relation to the form they indicate, that the eye in following them receives the impression of a contour, and by 'loading' portions of the form that come prominently forward to the light, a certain material relief can be obtained; while further, where desired, the brush work can reproduce the actual texture of objects, such as smooth flesh or wiry hair, the fell of beasts, or pile of velvets, the sharp cut angles of jewels and the like—the pigment being used in this case somewhat as the modeller's clay or wax. Shadowed portions which retire can on the other hand be kept very flat, so that their texture does not strike the eye and come unduly forward.

In handling various pigments a difficulty is met with, from which, as is so often the case in artistic practice, there is ingeniously drawn a fresh resource. Some colours, notably vegetable dyes, sometimes the most brilliant of all, are very deficient in 'body,' that is are thin and transparent and cannot be modelled in this manner. This thinness and transparency become however an advantage, by the use of the pigments as a transparent 'glaze' over previously laid impasto which has been allowed to dry. This impasto may be modelled up in white, or in white mingled with any desired tint, and the transparent glaze employed only to give colour. Effects of great brilliancy can thus be obtained, for the impasto underneath may be modelled according to any of the devices just indicated, and may be of a colour chosen to work in relation with the superimposed glaze. After the glaze is floated over the surface a touch of the thumb where the impasto is prominent and lights are required, will so far thin it as to let the underlying colour show through and blend with the deeper tint of the glaze in the shadows. Thus in the noble Veronese in the London National Gallery, called the Consecration of St. Nicholas, the kneeling figure of the Saint is robed in green with sleeves of golden orange. This latter colour is evidently carried through as under-painting over the whole draped portions of the figure, the green being then floated over and so manipulated that the golden tint shows through in parts and gives the high lights on the folds.

Transparent glazes can be employed with extreme subtlety as a finishing process in delicate passages of flesh painting, and convey very perfectly certain effects of nature. It is of course untrue to speak of a shadow as being 'cast upon' a surface, for shadow is merely a negative quality and signifies comparative absence of light, but the use of a transparent rubbing of grey over pearly flesh, as in Correggio's work, conveys exactly the impression of a shade superimposed on the skin, which retains its potential brightness below.

§ 180. The practice of Correggio and the Venetians;

No painters have made more use of glazing as a finishing process than the great Venetians and Correggio. It is somewhat remarkable that the practice of these supreme colourists was by no means such as we should have anticipated. So ripe and glowing are Venetian flesh tints, that we should rather have expected an under-painting in the warmest and richest tints of the palette, completed with veiling touches of thin cool pigment which should actually reproduce the natural relation of skin to flesh. As a fact however, both the Venetians and Correggio prepared for flesh with cool pigment, sometimes modelling up the forms in monochrome before application of the colouring, which often depended for its final effect to a great extent upon glazes.

Sir Charles Eastlake remarks that Correggio 'began his flesh colour on a comparatively colourless, and sometimes even cold scale, as compared with the glow of his finished works,'[1] while Venetian practice is well enough illustrated on the sufficiently numerous unfinished canvases of these prolific but sometimes over-hasty artists. Such a canvas was in the collection of Mr. Ruskin, the forms outlined and boldly laid in with little more than black and red, the characteristic Venetian ripeness and juiciness being at that stage conspicuously absent.

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[1] *Materials for a History of Oil-Painting*, II. p. 254.

We are fortunate in possessing a technical description of Titian's method of work during the later period of his life, which is doubly valuable as coming from a practical painter and pupil of the master—Palma Giovine. What is described is Veccellio's method of painting-in very solidly, and then finishing with delicate glazes. Palma told our informant[1] that he was wont to lay in his pictures with a great mass of pigment, which served as a species of bed or foundation for all that he was going to express in the upper painting. 'I remember,' he said, 'seeing his resolute strokes with brushes heavily charged with colour; sometimes he would use a dash of red earth, so to say, for middle tint; and at other times with a brushful of white and the same pencil filled with red with black and with yellow, he would model up the relief of a prominent form, with such science that in four strokes of the brush he would give the promise of a beautiful figure.' These 'precious foundations' being thus laid in, would be turned with their face to the wall, and left there often for some months without his ever looking at them. They would then be brought out one by one and subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny, 'as if they were the face of his most mortal enemy.' Where any defect or redundancy appeared, he would deal with the case like a skilful surgeon—pruning away excrescences, re-setting an arm, twisting a foot round into its proper place, regardless of pain to the patient. This would then be put aside to dry and another canvas would pass under the knife, till 'little by little he would have covered with real living flesh, these first brief abstracts of his intention.' When it came to 'delicate flavourings' in the shape of re-touches, he would go over the work, here with a dab of the thumb in the high lights (which he would thus model off into the half-tints), and there with a simple streak of the finger that dashed a spot of dark into some corner to heighten the effect, or else some blood-drop of crimson to vivify a surface. 'In this way he would go on and on, bringing up gradually to perfection his life-like figures . . . and in the finishing process he really painted more with the finger than with the brush.'

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[1] Boschini. The description occurs in that writer's treatise *Le ricche Miniere della Pittura Veneziana*, 2nd ed., Venezia, 1674, p. 16. There is a partial translation of it in Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *Life of Titian*, 2nd ed. London, 1881, i. p. 218.

§ 181. and of Rubens and the Flemish School.

This superimposing of transparent on solid painting may equally well be reversed, and the full-bodied pigment mixed with white may be struck into a previously laid transparent tint. The practice of painting into a wet glaze or rubbing was especially characteristic of the Flemings, with Rubens at their head, and was also followed by Frans Hals, who was born and brought up in Flanders though he set up his studio at Haarlem. Of the technique of Rubens, Decamps has preserved the tradition, which is fully borne out by an examination of his works. He began with rubbings of a deep, rich, transparent tint which served with certain modifications for the shadows, the lights being painted into the preparation while still wet. 'It seems,' wrote Decamps, 'that in the pictures of Rubens the portions that are turned from the light are never charged with pigment: it was one of the criticisms of his enemies to make out that his pictures were not painted with body enough, and showed little more than *coloured varnish*, that would not last longer than the painter's own lifetime. One sees at present that this prediction was wholly wanting in foundation. At first, it is true, under the brush of Rubens everything had the appearance of a *glaze*, but though he often derived some value from the effect of the canvas itself, this was always entirely covered with colour. . . . "Commence," he would say to his pupils, "by lightly laying in your shadows, but take care to let no white get into them, for this is the poison of a picture except in the lights. . . . For the lights on the contrary you may load the pigments as much as you please; they possess body, though at the same time you must take care to keep them pure. . . . Over the preparation you can pass again and add those decided touches which are always the distinctive marks of the great masters."'[1]

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[1] *La vie des Peintres Flamands*, etc., Paris, 1753, I. p. 310 f.

The characteristic advantages of this method of work are, first, breadth, and, second, speed. The under tint, often a rich soft amber or brown, being spread equally over the canvas makes its presence felt throughout, although all sorts of colours and textures may be painted into it. Hence the whole preserves a unity of effect that is highly pictorial. Further, as the whole beauty of the work depends on the skill of hand by which the solid pigment is partly sunk into the glaze at the shadow side, while it comes out drier and stronger in the lights, and as this must be done rightly at once or not at all, the process under a hand like that of Rubens is a singularly rapid one. Exquisite are the effects thus gained when the under tint is allowed to peep through here and there, blending with the solid touches to produce the subtlest effects of tone and colour.

The most striking illustration, however, of this use of full-bodied colours struck into and over transparent rubbings, is to be found in some of the work of Frans Hals. Houbraken has left on record the following: 'It is said that he had the custom of laying in his portraits with oily and softly blending colours (zyn Pourtretten vet, en zachtsmeltende aan te leggen) and then afterwards to put in the brush-strokes, saying, "Now we must have the handwriting of the master into it."'[1] Such 'handwriting,' virile, distinct, we read in characteristic pieces of his work, nowhere more clearly than in the picture called Junker Ramp and his Sweetheart, exhibited in Paris in 1883.

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[1] *Groote Schouburgh*, etc., 's Gravenhage, 1753, I. p. 93.

Here the heads are painted in with thin glazy colours and much medium in simple warm flesh tints of low tone, while the opaque pigments—greys, yellow flesh-lights, cherry reds—are struck in with firm touches that can be counted, while the original liquid tints, showing through them the texture of the canvas, are in places left entirely untouched.

§ 182. The place of Technique in Modern Painting.

In their use of these various methods of oil-painting, the great masters as a rule exhibit a reserve and a sober tact not always maintained by their modern followers. For example, the practice of painting into a wet rubbing may secure a rich and harmonious effect, but it may also lead an inferior practitioner into monotony and unctuousness. The warm glazes of the Venetians, a little too thickly and widely spread, will suffuse the whole piece with the spurious sunshine delighted in by second-rate colourists. Then again, there are certain specious devices of modelling impasto so as to bring high lights into actual relief or to imitate the textures of natural objects, that we learn from ancient practice to distrust. It follows of course from the nature of oil pigments that lighter passages, involving a free use of white, are painted with the most body, while shadows can be indicated with considerable depth as well as transparency by the mere rubbing which sometimes satisfied Frans Hals. Hence the light parts may stand out in thick impasto beyond the rest, and the highest light tend to become a projecting dot of pigment. The great masters accept these mechanical consequences of the medium they employ, but so far from emphasising them they endeavoured to minimize their working. Thus Rembrandt paints solidly under his shadows, though he may use glazes as a finish. It was of course discerned by these essentially sound practitioners that the projecting high light, while it may seem to give a certain brilliancy for the moment, really defeats its own object, for in side or top illumination it will cast an actual shadow in its neighbourhood just where shadow is not needed, and in the course of time may attract so much dust as to tell out rather as a spot of black.

The case is the same with the imitation of relief effects. This is at times carried pretty far by masters of great research in their practice, such as Rembrandt and Reynolds, who will work into a plastic mass of white pigment with the handle of the paint-brush till a sort of relief design is formed, the colouring being adjusted by glazes. As a rule however, this dangerous approach to a confusion between graphic and plastic delineation is avoided, and the principles of the painter's art, which presuppose a flat surface, are frankly maintained.

It is indeed just as much a mistake to attempt to present plastic effects in painting as to imitate the distinctive features of painting in sculpture. Painting represents form by a convention, and it does best when it abides within the boundaries of that convention, and cheats the glance by its own painted light-and-shade, not by light-and-shade from without, which must vary with accidents of local illumination. It was always held at the Renaissance to be one of the glories of painting that it had its own light-and-shade in itself. A similar criticism applies to texture-painting. If the masterpieces of still-life painting left by the Dutch be examined, it will be seen that the differing surfaces of stuffs and metal and glass, of smooth-rinded apples and gnarled lemons, are all most justly rendered, but with very little aid from plastic reproduction of textures; that is to say, the way of painting will show a certain variation in accordance with the textures to be represented, though this will never be carried to the extent of actual reproduction of the surfaces. Correggio and the Venetians did not prepare for flesh as they prepared for drapery and backgrounds, and they always show within due limits that they are mindful not only of the differing textures of flesh and stuffs, but of the varying 'feel' of the latter among themselves. In all these matters the moderation of the really great painters contrasts with the fevered efforts after what is striking and brilliant in practice, too much favoured in modern times.

The truth is that the salvation of the painter in oils does not depend on the size or shape of his brush-strokes and their distance apart, nor on any mixture and manipulation of pigment. Let it not be forgotten that, while some great masters are varied and searching in their technical procedure, others, in every way their compeers, are perfectly simple and straightforward. Titian and Rubens, as we have just noted, play off one set of effects against another, and the former especially elaborates with successive coatings till his fastidious taste is satisfied. But by their side stands Velasquez—limpidly clear in execution and direct in process, achieving his aim by his unrivalled lightness of hand, and satisfied with the simplest equipment.[1] If Rembrandt labour in his technique, the genre painters of his country are so unassuming, that Fromentin confesses that no one knows how they portioned out their operations, whether they painted on grounds light or dark, and coloured in the substance of the impasto or on the top of it.[2] Reynolds, whose experimental vein exhausted itself in technical devices and in media, was matched at almost every point by one of the directest of workers—Gainsborough.

It is not the process, indeed, that matters, but the result—and this result, arrived at sometimes after much searching and labour, sometimes at once by happy accident, will always depend upon a most exquisite nicety of handling, by which, amidst a play of varying tints and tones, the Too-much is always by a hair's-breadth avoided, and the whole subdued to the most perfect harmony. No better example of such harmony can be found than the head of Philip IV by Velasquez in the

[1] M. Paul Lefort (*Velasquez*, Paris, 1888, p. 140) states that ochres and red and brown earths form the staple ingredients of the master's palette, while he is disposed to believe that Velasquez hardly made any use of lakes, *i.e.* of the rich glazing tints so beloved of the Venetians.

[2] *Les Maîtres d'autrefois*, p. 185.

National Gallery, one of the finest examples of oil-painting easily accessible to the British student (Plate XVI). Though one of the later works of the master, it is constructed out of a carefully wrought and smooth impasto, without any bravura strokes, such as those which model up the rugged features of the Esop at Madrid. The lights are nowhere loaded. The hair is painted not modelled, the jewels on the dress easily touched-in without relief-effect or juggling. The wonder of the thing is the infinite variety over a surface so simply treated. The face is in such broad even light that one has to adopt some device which brings it freshly into the field of vision—as by turning the head down or looking at it through the hand—in order to see how firm is the modelling, and when this is done it comes out with the plastic fulness of a stereoscopic picture. The flesh tints are simple enough—raw umber, red earth, vermilion, a touch of cobalt, with yellow and white? Yet take almost any square inch of surface on the face—say the upper lip with its moustache—and note the effect of each one of the free brush-strokes which drew the pale umber hair over the warm rubbing on the flesh; or in the cold lack-lustre blue eye, measure the apparent ease of the touches against their firm, incisive clearness. Everything is there—form, expression, in a word, *the life*—but it has all grown into perfection on the canvas so quietly, so smoothly—as if Velasquez had indeed, in the phrase of Raphael Mengs, painted with the *will* only and not with the hand!

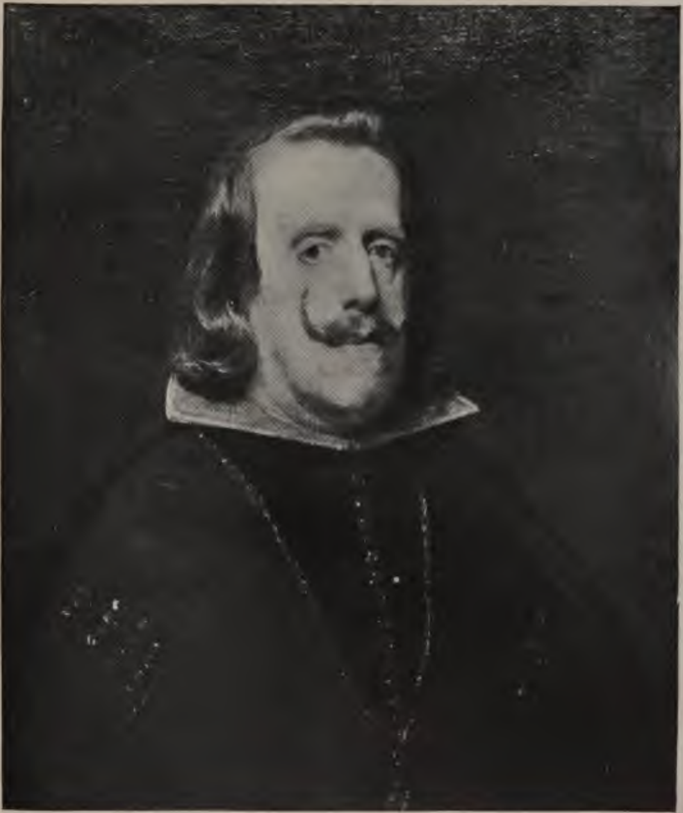

PLATE XVI. To face p. 406.
Philip IV, by Velasquez, in the National Gallery.

'*Faire vivre, voilà la grande difficulté de la peinture et son but*'! exclaims the apostle of the modern in the painting of our time.[1] 'Faire vivre'; yes, here is the artist brought face to face with the realities of his craft, to despair of all trickery, and to learn from Velasquez that after all it is by his relation to nature, not his sleight of hand or taste in contrasted tints, that he may hope to rise to the companionship of the great of old! A mastery over these technical methods of oil-painting is of course a necessary part of his equipment, for it is only through this that he can compass that artistic rendering of nature spoken of in § 88 as 'the Essence of the Painter's Art,' and reveal that Beauty and Significance in the outward show of things, which only the painter's eye can discern and only his hand interpret. It is a great mistake to suppose that technique is something external—something that can be put on or off, as if distinct from other qualities displayed in art. On the contrary, in painting it should be so essential a part of the work, that we should feel doubtful if the subject could be expressed in any other way than by the particular brush-strokes actually employed. Yet this technique must be the painter's servant and not his master. Its work is to 'make the subject live,' and this can only be done through that intellectual and moral sympathy by which the artist lives again in his own imagination the life of things. Fine painting is not Nature alone nor merely Art; but rather a mystic marriage of both that is consummated only in the birth of the new creation, the work of art.

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[1] *Alfred Stevens, Impressions*, etc., No. ccevii.

This relation of technique to the representative part of painting is typical of the relation of art in general to human life. In art the human spirit creates a world of its own, in the making and the use of which it moves self-determined and in freedom; but, as was shown in an early chapter (§§ 4 ff.), this self-determination is not mere wilfulness, nor is this freedom divorced from a rational aim and control. If therefore the technical handling of a great painter, as the expression of his own individuality, is like all artistic activity self-determined and free, it is at the same time conditioned, like art in general, by the facts of the real world. The relations between art in its various forms and objective truths and utilities have been illustrated in the foregoing discussions, and it remains only to add a concluding word.

Gottfried Semper, in a note to his work on *Style*, has summarized these relations in a striking figure. Rejecting all easy and logical theories that would reduce art to the handmaid of nature or of utility, he adopts the bold comparison of art to a masked play, a nightly revel, the first condition of which is detachment from the ordinary business of existence—'the smoke of the carnival-taper is the true atmosphere of art'! Art is the mask, the performance, the mimic show, behind which are hidden the truths of nature and of human life. These truths are not ignored in the representation but they are beautified, transfigured, and in Semper's phrase, annulled; for 'the annulling of reality, of the *material*, is essential wherever it is intended that the *form* shall stand forth as the pregnant symbol, the independent creation of the human spirit.' In this creation art is free, and acknowledges beauty as her own first law of truth; while she is not thereby emancipated from all relation to the substantial verities which lie behind the representation. In the freedom of art lies hid a deep respect for law. Her structures are based upon the rock, her widest flights are upon reason's wing. And so to finish in the words of Semper, 'it boots little to wear a mask where behind the mask things are not right, or where the mask is useless. Before the material (of which we cannot get rid) can, in the sense in which we are speaking, be *annulled in the artistic representation*, it is necessary first above all things that it should be completely mastered. Only perfect technical finish, well-understood and correct handling of the material according to its qualities, and, above all, a constant reference to these last in the process of giving the artistic form, can make the material forgotten, can emancipate from it entirely the artistic representation, can in a word elevate a simple study of nature to the rank of a lofty work of art.'[1]

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[1] *Der Stil*, I. p. 216, note.

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